Mike Quill on the I.R.A., the N.L.F., and the I.R.T.

March 1966

Ramparts

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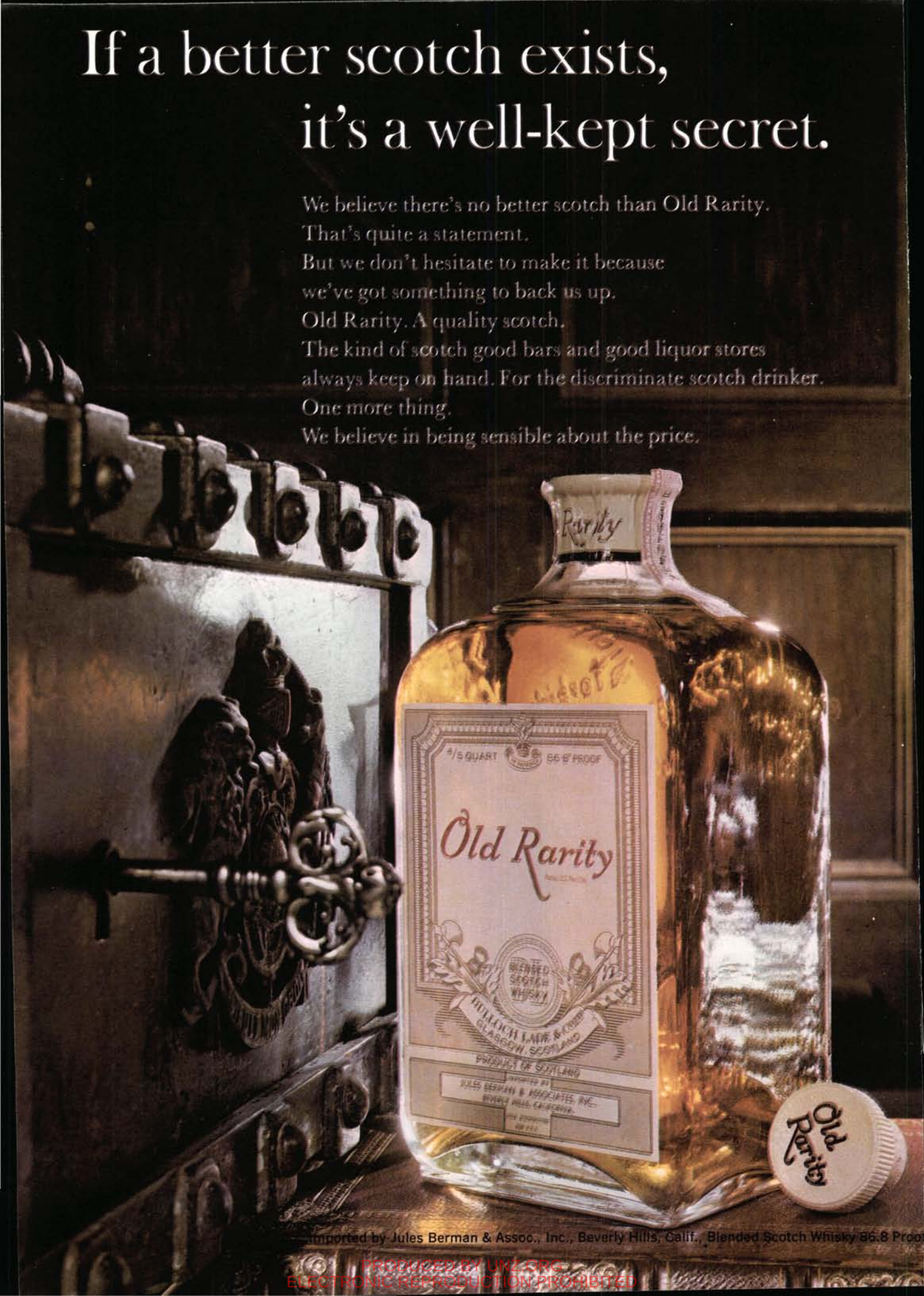

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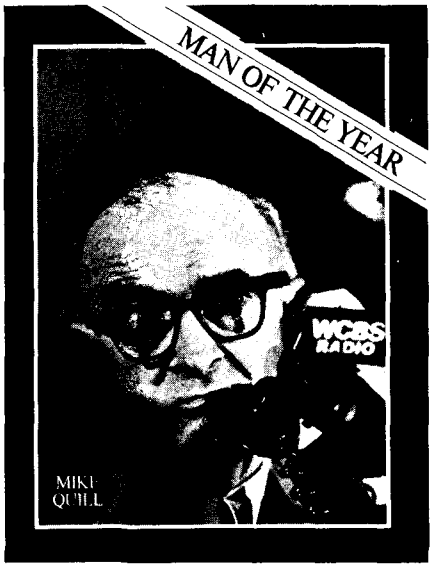

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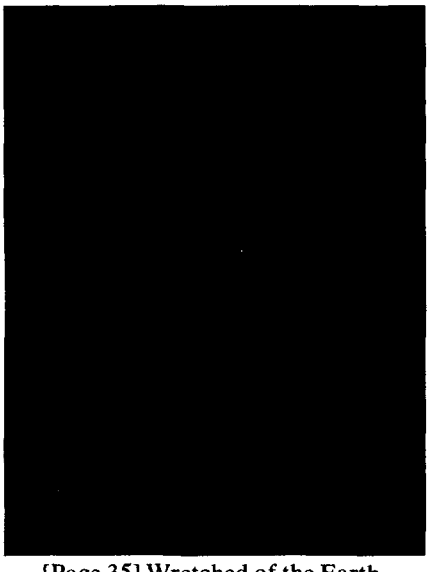

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Apologia:

IN THE FINEST TRADITION of Lamont Cranston, the little man who writes the marginal notes in Marginalia has disappeared. So have his bracketed comments which used to enlighten or confuse the reader. We killed them because nobody—well, *hardly anybody—liked them. Their* passing is not noted with sorrow except by a few of us reactionaries who do not much like to see anything change, ever. To new subscribers this is probably all very boring and a little like a wake for flying buttresses. Sorry, but unbridled sentiment is one of our weaknesses.

Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* (page 36) should be required reading for any analysis of the endemic violence of the American ghetto. For the vestiges of the racist colonialism which Fanon studies—the master-slave relationship, the economics of exploitation—are at bedrock, below even the roots of the "problem" that Mr. Johnson is attempting to legislate away in the Great Society (Civil Rights Division). Some liberals may balk at this analogy, for colonialism, after all, is an un-American concept. But you cannot read Fanon on Africa without thinking of Harlem and Watts.

RAMPARTS' News Editor, David Welsh, described in "Death in Kentucky" (December 1965) the licensed rape of the Appalachian countryside by the mining trusts. Last month, the Kentucky State Legislature passed a tough bill curbing such surface or "strip" mining. We claim no credit for this legislation, but we welcome it.

Apologia, a Vulgate relative of *Marginalia* and *Ephemera*, is what is called in the magazine business a "new feature." It stands a good chance of being the best section in RAMPARTS because it is the shortest. W. H.

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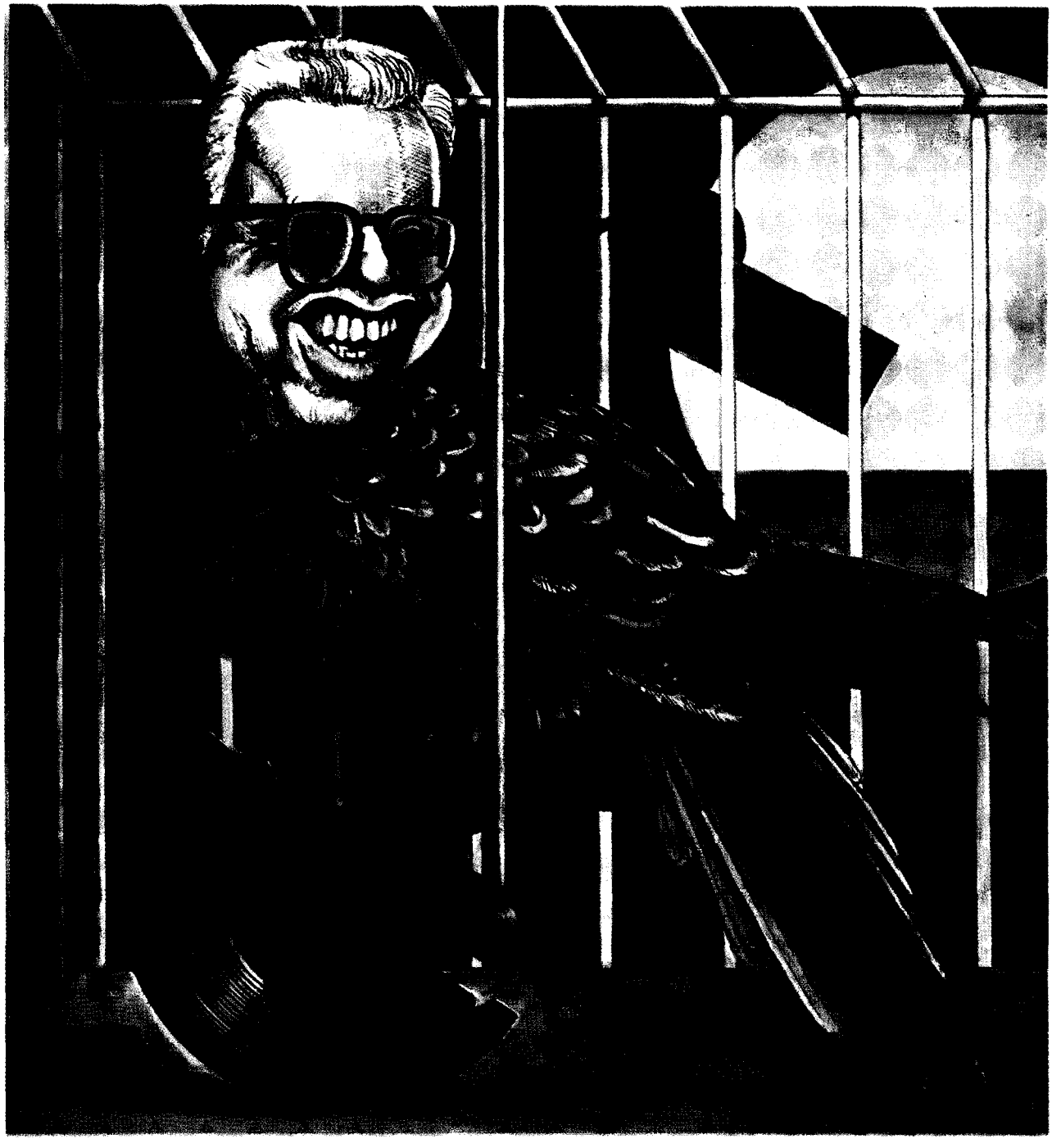

Sorel's Bestiary

The Parrot

[*Goldbergus platytudinus*]

Number 2

Above we see the Pale-headed Broadtail (or Talltale as he is sometimes known), easily recognized by his thick-tufted white crown. Although he shows less aptitude for elocution than the Egg-headed Cockatoo (extinct), he is, nevertheless, prized for his liberal coo and his habit of nesting with divergent species. He is semi-nocturnal, exhibiting much hors d'oeuvres hunting activity after dusk. His frequently-changing migratory habits puzzle ornithologists who had heretofore assumed that the Potomac was his permanent nesting ground. The Broadtail is often observed seeking out an empty rostrum before laying an egg. In centuries past, parrots were often seen in the company of swashbuckling buccaneers, but with today's changing modes of piracy, they are limited to premiers, prime ministers and presidents.

Text and Illustration by Edward Sorel

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Marginalia

Editorial:

Everyone knows how terrible-tempered Mike Quill felt about labor questions, ever since he led his Transport Workers Union on a traffic-snarling subway walkout in New York City. Not so well-known were his opinions on the Vietnamese war, reprinted here from the TWU Express. They generally reflect the views, though not necessarily the rhetoric, of the editors.

IN THE DOMESTIC and foreign field we will, naturally, support our government but we will not be browbeaten into silence; we have learned through long experience that gunboat diplomacy in Central and South America is a diplomacy of suicide.

At this time I am not so sure that we did not create Castro by supporting Batista until he plundered the country and got his last $100 million into the banks of Switzerland. At this time I am not so sure that flattops and Marines were the best policy in Santo Domingo. I say this, remembering too well 30 years ago when an American fruit company meted out similar treatment to General Sandino in Nicaragua. His only demand was freedom for the country and his reward was to be shot.

Let no man or woman say that we in TWU are not horror-stricken at the bloodletting of young American lives in Vietnam, because today I predict that no matter how many men, women and children are bombed from the air, these freedom fighters will eventually reach a greater part of their goal, which is the right to live their lives in their own way.

The republican army with a goal, with a flag, or with a gun cannot be conquered. This was proved when Lloyd George had to grant a truce to the Irish Republican Army on July 11, 1921, after 700 years of oppression, of bickering, of battle and of hit-and-run tactics. I do not wish to arouse any feelings of this period of Irish history now, at what happened at the bargaining table between the Irish and the English in 1921; but the revolutionary movement in Ireland smacks awfully close to the revolutionary movement in Vietnam today.

We are empowered to take hundreds of thousands of lives by the use of our modern weapons, yet reports coming from Southeast Asia indicate that we are not winning the battle. Is this bloodletting necessary? If they want their way of life, let them have it.

We supported to the hilt the fight against the North Koreans and 12 years ago an uneasy truce was arranged, but still there is no peace. The French lost 400,000 men and women in the area of Vietnam and they did not get a chance for even an orderly retreat. We lost some of the finest men and women that America has produced at the 38th Parallel in Korea in support of one of the outstanding gangsters in history, Syngman Rhee, who had to go into asylum in Hawaii and who shuttled off the human coil not long ago.

What then will happen if we should have an orderly retreat and end the bloodletting in Vietnam? Time and history will show that we were not on a fishing expedition; in other words, a period play which will say, "Let the dead fall where they will."

We are being told that we are engaged in a battle against communism. We were told the very same story in our fight at the 38th Parallel in Korea. Should this madness keep up, we will find ourselves entering Red China.

The United States can make nuclear warheads, we can make the weapons of war, we can produce these instruments of destruction, but we are not a warlike country and we do not have hundreds of millions for a land army. I fully agree with President Johnson that we are seeking no territory that is not our own; but the truth is that we are pouring hundreds of thousands of American lives into territory that we do not need and that is not our own. Should the forces behind the American flag cross the Yalu River into China, then we will notice the silent pact between Russia and China go into effect. I believe there is yet time—if the bombing could be stopped and if a truce could be arranged—to end this senseless war. I believe the gunboat diplomacy will not win in South America. I believe that a salt-water canal across South America would be a great asset to the world, but the countries that would now sign such a pact for a salt-water canal could change their minds in ten years as Nasser changed his on the Suez Canal.

Now then, if my ideas were carried out, would the United States government have anything to do? I am certain they would. We have 20 million American Negroes who are semi-slaves, if not completely slaves. At Christmastime a great portion of our population sings, "Peace on earth, goodwill to men." Let that goodwill start at home within the borders of the United States, both North and South.

Let us make up our minds now that by our own acts will we be judged by the damning millions of many peoples. Let us show them now that we are truly a democracy—then, and not until then, will we in the United States have the right to work overtime at flag waving.

Illustrations by Benedict Kocian

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Etcetera:

THE DEVIANTS

by Paul Jacobs

NOW THAT THE ELECTION is over I can reveal the fact that Barry Goldwater is a deviant. The reason I know this is that I'm one, too.

But I never knew either Goldwater or I were deviants until I read in the New York Times that a doctor, a psychologist and a psychiatrist had announced, on the basis of a careful scientific study, that men with tattoos, like Goldwater and me, were deviants. According to the doctors, deviants such as the Senator and me "have more difficulty in their relationships with women than unmarked patients," are more frequently divorced or single, were often truants in our younger days, and are more often arrested and sent to jail.

Even worse, according to the study, men who are tattooed are "impulsive" and more willing to act out their desires and frustrations.

Nonsense, I thought, utter rubbish. Just because I have a fish tattooed on my right ankle that keeps me from drowning, am I some kind of a nut? Is Goldwater a deviant just because he has four dots tattooed on the heel of his left hand to show that he belongs to an Indian tribe whose members are all white men? But a few weeks later, after I had joined the Tattoo Club of America, I began to get troubled about my possible deviations from the normal and, along with mine, those of the Senator.

Even though I had disbelieved what the New York Times said about me and Goldwater, my faith in our non-deviance was shaken when, only a week later, I received in the mail an application blank for membership in the Tattoo Club of America, "a non-profit organization having the purpose of spreading the knowledge of tattooing and making it more generally accepted." Club dues are only $4 a year, explained the mimeographed letter accompanying the application, and as a member I would receive the Tattoo News, could attend meetings and participate in the annual election of Mr. and Miss Tattoo.

Naturally, I decided to join immediately and began filling out the application blank, which asked name, age, sex, address, occupation, the usual kinds of questions put to any prospective member of any organization. But then a new note was struck, for the query concerning my marital status was followed by "Does spouse object?" Then came, "Are you still collecting tattoos?" and "Do you tattoo?".

The questionnaire on the front page of the application worried me a little, too. In typical sociological fashion it asked whether I was "interested," "indifferent," or "not interested" in a variety of matters including "meeting other members, correspondence with other members, photo exchange with other members and buying photos from a photographer." After worrying my way through those questions, I was then asked where I stood on reading about such things as "history of tattooing, news from tattoo clubs overseas, new books, newspaper and magazine articles, tattooing in Europe, tattooing on the Marquesas Islands, tattooed women, studios opened and closed, and new equipment."

After I'd digested these matters and marked the range of my interests, I had to answer whether I wanted to have my full name and address printed in the Tattoo News or preferred keeping it secret from other TCA members. The questionnaire also informed me that the club would be interested in having photos of my tattoos to be kept in the club files and not shown to anybody without my consent.

It was right about this point that I began to wonder whether maybe the three scientists didn't have something going for them after all. And when I turned the application over to answer the questions on the reverse side, I began to worry even more, for I was asked to list not only all my tattoos by the part of the body, the design, the artist, the city and the year, but something else, too: the club wanted a "list of piercings (if any)." Still, I sent in my $4 with the completed application.

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By return mail, I received my first copy of the Tattoo News, which I read eagerly. But the very first item was a terrible blow to me for it described how, when Crown Prince Rudolf of Austria and the Baroness Vetsera were found dead, the bullet had entered the Prince's heart right through the middle of an asp tattoo that was an old Egyptian charm to protect rulers. And as if that wasn't enough, the same item went on to say that Prince Rudolf's cousin, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, whose assassination at Sarajevo led to World War I, had been shot right through the center of his *asp* tattoo!

Somewhat disheartened about the efficacy of my fish as a disaster-averter, I went on reading the club newspaper to discover some fascinating bits of information, including a listing of books in foreign languages about tattooing and a long description of a Honolulu artist who tattoos with high frequency sound, thus cutting down on pain such as I encountered in Hong Kong. Another tattooist tried to shift his skills over to counterfeiting and was arrested, according to the paper, which also listed a whole series of address changes for tattoo parlors all over the United States. And should I ever get to Australia, I am certainly going to look up Cindy Ray, a fellow member of the club, who is only 21, but is "solidly covered from toes to knees, from shoulders to wrists: she has a huge design on her back and her chest has been fully covered."

And if ever Cindy comes to the United States, we can meet at two beaches, listed by the club, "where tattoo fans meet and can swim undisturbed." So, too, the next time I return to Paris, I want to visit Bruno Coccioli, another club member, who tattoos in "The French Way," is starring in a movie and adds a blood group tattoo free to all his customers who want it. By the time I got to the club's own obituary section, named "The Last Buzz," I had begun to feel that we tattoo collectors are in no way different from used car salesmen or the readers of the Quarterly Bulletin published by the California Book Club, to which I also belong.

But then, once again, I was forced to confront the possibility that the three doctors are right for, together with my club news, I received Part 12 of "The History of Tattooing" by H. Rudolph Inhelder, who also serves as secretary of the club. The period covered by Part 12 extends from 1492 to 1798 and while many of the historical items cited, with footnotes by Mr. Inhelder, tell of people being tattooed so their bodies could be identified if they were lost in a battle or children being tattooed so that their parents could recognize them if they were kidnapped, a few of Mr. Inhelder's notes caused me some disturbance and started me worrying about Goldwater again.

For example, Mr. Inhelder describes how a young French nobleman had the faces of two saints tattooed on his buttocks before attending a Jesuit school, because he expected that he might be punished for pranks. But when the first whipping he had anticipated was to be administered, the young man called upon the two saints to perform a miracle and then bared himself. At this point, according to the history, "the padres and students went down on their knees, kissed the pictures, excused themselves for the error and venerated the young nobleman as a blessed one."

That's a pretty wild gag, I mused, turning the page, and that young man was obviously a pretty far-out character. But not as far-out as "King Carl XIV of Sweden and Norway, 1818–44." who was once Napoleon's Marshal of the Empire. He, according to the secretary of my club, had his upper left arm tattooed with a Jacobin cap, his initials, the date of his birth, the slogan "Liberté, egalité, fraternité," a skull with crossbones, and a swastika. Presumably he never let old Nap catch him with his crowded arm uncovered, and just as I was thinking what a risk he had been running, I went on to read that in 1922 F. von Luschan of Dresden, Germany, owned "this piece of skin."

I got my tattoo (collected, I have discovered through my club, is the proper phrase for the process) rather recently in Hong Kong under very unromantic circumstances.

I had wandered into what purported to be the "Rose Tattoo" studio, only to back out hastily when I discovered I was in the kitchen of a Chinese family's apartment and that the family was eating. But before I got completely out of the door, murmuring my apologies, an old Chinese gentleman detached himself from the family group and took me by the arm over to a table on which lay a collection of rather dirty-looking instruments.

"You want tattóo," he announced, rather than asked.

"Yes," I answered rather weakly, ready to leave without it, however, as I looked down at the tattoonig needles, caked with ink.

"What kind of tattoo you want?" he asked, not releasing his grasp on my arm.

"A fish," I answered. Sometime earlier a friend had told me, incorrectly, as it turned out later, that many Orientals have a fish tattooed on their foot to keep them from drowning, and since I swim a good deal, I had decided to follow their example and keep myself from drowning, too. So I explained to the old gentleman that I wanted a fish tattooed on my right foot, just below the ankle.

"You see picture fish you want?" he asked me then, directing my attention to a wall covered with sketches of tattoo designs. I looked them over carefully, but I saw no sketches that resembled anything like the kind of fish I had in my own mind—a cross between a shark and a barracuda, lean, lithe, fiercely strong, able with a swish of the tail to cut swiftly through the water in search of enemies.

"No, I don't see anything I want."

"Okay," he said. "You draw picture fish and I copy freehand."

And so I drew him a little sketch of me as a fish, long, lean and lithe. The old man looked at it and then at me. We discussed the price which came to approximately 60 cents and I agreed to pay it.

"Okay, you take off shoe and sock."

In a moment, he had my foot in his lap and started with his needle. To my great shock, it hurt like hell. In fact, it hurt so much that as soon as I saw he had completed the outline of the fish, I was ready to quit since, after all, I was only concerned with its symbolic value. But, despite my protestations, he wouldn't release my foot and kept repeating as he tattooed away, "Must put in scales and fins, must make colors. Cost no more but must do."

It was then I realized I was in the

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hands, literally, of an artist and I submitted myself to the pain until he was finished. Finally, he stopped and looked down with some satisfaction at his work, which was just starting to ooze a little blood.

"Okay, you done now. Put sock back on."

"Aren't you going to put on some antiseptic and a bandage?" I asked, frightened by a vision of my foot dropping off from a gangrene infection.

"Antiseptic? Bandage? Okay."

He reached into the drawer before him, pulled out an open, dirty bottle of Vaseline and smeared some on the tattoo. Then he got up from his stool, walked into another room, and came back carrying a piece of toilet paper which he folded up and placed over the tattoo, holding it in place with a piece of Scotch tape that looked as if it had already been used at least once.

"Okay. You got bandage now."

Fortunately, my foot did not fall off, although the scab over the tattoo lasted long enough so that when I returned home to San Francisco my wife let out a scream as she touched it. "It's got scales!" However, luckily for my marriage, the scab-scales flaked off a few days later.

Well, maybe the three doctors are right about me and Barry. For one thing, there is a big deviance between my image of myself as a fish and the reality that the old Chinese artist evidently saw: even though he had my sketch of the shark-barracuda in front of him, he tattooed me, forever, with a fat, little butterfish, hardly capable of even swallowing a tiny guppy. And in a recent issue of Life magazine, I discovered that Barry had gotten a new tattoo added to his four dots. He now has a half-circle around the dots because he's been made chief of the white Indians.

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Opinion:

DEAR MR. VICE-PRESIDENT

by Stanley K. Sheinbaum

December 3, 1965

The Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey
Vice-President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. VICE-PRESIDENT:

Your November 17 letter to me is ominous.

In one sentence (paragraph two, page two) you try on the one hand to encourage dissent, and on the other hand you question by imputation the affiliation and loyalties of those involved in the protest. I quote herewith that paragraph: "Finally, while I have never questioned the loyalty of the greater portion of those who demonstrate in protest against U.S. involvement in Vietnam, I find it difficult to dismiss as a coincidence that the demonstrations of mid-October occurred simultaneously, not only in the United States but throughout the world, at the outset of *Hanoi's Hate America Campaign*."

Your import is clear. Had it come from a lesser citizen than yourself I could take it in stride. However, when it is the Vice-President of the United States who is the author I am frightened. We know that you cannot, because of your office, make the accusation explicit. However, whether or not you so intended, the mere hint by you is regarded as intimidation, nothing less.

Your reasoning is dubious. Protests and demonstrations have been underway since last spring. You isolate the mid-October events and assert a strange coincidence with a new Hanoi propaganda campaign. Any initiation by Hanoi at any time since last spring could be appraised by you as an interesting coincidence.

I happen to know that the timing of the mid-October protest was determined by the start of the fall semester. I can just see Ho Chi Minh rummaging American university catalogues to set the date for what you call *Hanoi's Hate America Campaign.*

Nor do you have good information about those leading the campus movements. A number of us, including Michael Harrington and Paul Jacobs, have studied the leadership at close hand. It falls into two general categories, describable as the New Left and the new radicals. The former are the inheritors of all the old Marxist groups, e.g. the Stalinists, the Trotskyites, the Maoists, the Du Bois Clubs, etc. The new radicals, including SDS, SNCC, etc., appear to be in revolt against ideology, be it Capitalist or Communist. The fact of the matter is—and I base this on my own observations during the October 15-16 protest at Berkeley where I was a speaker—that the latter group of anti-ideologues was in charge. Indeed, the situation was such that the Marxist groups could obtain participation only by setting up the familiar Berkeley tables on the periphery of the protest arena. They were not among the Vietnam Day Committee leaders, who were clearly of the new radical variety. For you to "suggest" a link between them and Communist Hanoi is plain nonsense.

Because I speak at various teach-ins

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and protests, I have asked Attorney General Katzenbach to identify those groups which might actually be disloyal to the United States. Until Mr. Katzenbach provides such information, I must continue to select invitations by the seat of my pants. Undoubtedly, I will be "associated" occasionally with persons or groups whose motivations I myself would question, but I lack the resources to perform a security check on each. But I shall not back away from my role simply because Communists happen to agree with my position.

I am frightened by what the Vietnam issue appears to be doing to the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. In the early '50s you and the ADA recognized the dangers of Communist name-calling, and you led the good fight. What is so different about the current situation that this threat to our rights and liberties seems less a danger today than it did a dozen years ago? What is so different now that even you slip into its practices, inadvertently or not?

Respectfully,
STANLEY K. SHEINBAUM

January 14, 1966

The Hon. Hubert H. Humphrey
Vice-President of the United States
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. VICE-PRESIDENT:

I thought I was raising a serious question about protests in my last letter. Your not having responded leaves me disturbed as I witness continued "discouragement" of criticism.

That eminent protector of our rights (and of the Right), J. Edgar Hoover, paints campus activity Red. Orders go down to dump Simon Casady, California Democratic Council leader, because he won't go along. Protest mail to the White House gets turned over to the Internal Security Division of the Justice Department. Dissenting students are reclassified 1-A. Who would not be intimidated?

Try another formulation. On one pretext or another (see below) we are at war. Never before, however, has a President sent draftees into action without first asking Congress. But let a youth today resist the draft or a draftee resist being shipped to Vietnam, and he gets up to ten years at hard labor. What do you call these if not political prisoners? They are not conscientious objectors as defined on religious grounds. Nor have their leaders been capable—for so many reasons—of convincing them of the war's merit. So they become rebels.

Any war destroys a society's fabric as the safeguards get eaten away. When that war is itself indefensible, cynicism takes over as Red-baiting; distortion, propaganda and image building become the necessary tools.

AND SO THE COUNTRY is so much the less for what our leaders have done to it. It is in trouble, but not because of the enemy we face in Vietnam. Rather, as Ambassador Goldberg put it, these leaders cannot maintain their credibility with their own people. "Their own people" have been whipped into an anti-Communist frenzy, have been backed into a war, and have not been told why. Whatever reason fits the moment is given: We will lose face, all of Southeast Asia will fall, we need Vietnam for strategic reasons, our credibility must be maintained, China is the real problem, or we must defend the freedom of the courageous South Vietnamese who sent for us. Which is it? No good answer exists, and nonsense and propaganda take over: It is aggression, not civil war, Diem has the support of the people, strategic hamlets are the answer. No? Then helicopters will do it —or maybe defoliation; no Buddhist problem exists; the U.S. will withdraw by 1965; we want a limited war (as we put bases in Thailand and we bomb Laos and we multiply our troops tenfold); we will not escalate (as we airstrike north, both to stop the supply flow and to bring Hanoi to its knees!).

There have been ten years of this, and I submit that from such hypocrisy is bred cynicism. Why do you think there is so much suspicion of the sincerity of the President's peace offensive? It is the disbelief resulting from the infinity of a "the people can be told anything" attitude in Washington. Granted that Mr. Johnson is partially inheritor, but his predecessors were never foolish enough to follow the policy with such intensity.

But where are we when a peace offensive raises issues of credibility not only from I. F. Stone and William F. Buckley Jr., but also from closer in: James Reston and Joseph Alsop. In this I am less concerned that the Administration has suffered than that the constituency is without the security of sensing good leadership. Is this the Great Society?

Which all forces a question on me. If I so suspect the Administration's peace motives, what could convince me otherwise? Certainly, the President wants peace. His problem is that he is not winning the war, and therefore he cannot obtain peace on his own terms. The only question is whether he is then willing to pay the price—the inclusion of Communists in a coalition. Certainly, this is the very minimum the enemy would consider in a negotiation, and I would expect Mr. Johnson knows it. But after all the noise and shooting, it is more than the American people would accept in their current mood. Thus, the President is trapped by years of anti-Communist propaganda which created that mood, and which you and he have consciously generated. On the other hand, if he were serious about negotiations—and therefore, willing to compromise—he would begin to persuade his constituency that the bitter pill of Communist inclusion is the minimum alternative to continued and, probably, increased hostility. If he is not so prepared to exert his leadership, then any move to the bargaining table is disingenuous; its purpose is more propaganda abroad, more cynicism at home, more deterioration.

I have been asked about the effectiveness of the protests. I don't know the answer, but I will say this: The two major Johnson peace gestures, his Johns Hopkins speech last April and last January's offensive, were clearly defensive. Mounting criticism, at home and abroad, preceded both. In March, 1965, the 17 unaligned nations had appealed for peace, and the teach-ins were in full swing. The nature of dissent had changed somewhat by December, but a peak was again being reached as it became clear that Hanoi was not responding to the bombing and had "unexpectedly" escalated so that our 190,000 troop level was no stronger than the earlier 20,000. At the same time, revelations were forthcoming that the President had been anything but forthright in previous peace maneuvers. To the extent that criticism has caused him to say he seeks peace,

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which clearly was not the case before last April, I have satisfaction that his hand is being stayed somewhat. However, I am dubious about the current peace proposal, and it is your Administration's practices that have so conditioned me. One day after the peace offensive is announced, so also is a new scorched-earth policy, plus a step-up in the use of nonlethal gas. Within several days you return loudly proclaiming that the enemy has shown no signs of response, the obvious implication being that only the U.S. is interrested in peace. More propaganda. It is not easy to believe what you people do or say.

A close look at the Johns Hopkins "gesture" helps explain my own incredulous reaction. The speech was a masterpiece of propaganda; it gave the appearance of policy change without a change of policy:

1) The President first named China as the enemy.

2) He then ruled out China as a partner in the long-run developmental effort by including only industrialized countries. The explicit inclusion of the Soviet Union was a clear-cut exclusion of China.

3) He precluded a UN role in any peace talks: first, by including only "governments concerned"; second, by assigning the UN a role only in the aid portion of the speech; and third, by official rebuffs to U Thant in the weeks preceding this speech. (Some time later, Peking rejected a U Thant appeal, whereupon Johnson "urged" a UN peace role. When they were willing, we were not; when they were not, then it was safe, nay, *good propaganda*, for us to call upon the UN.)

4) By referring only to "governments concerned" he further ruled out the Viet Cong (National Liberation Front) as party to peace talks. Yet he claimed to be setting no conditions.

5) He carefully avoided agreeing to unconditional negotiations, for which there was considerable pressure from the 17 nations. In this carefully worded document, he first distinguished between discussion and negotiation, and then went on to offer only unconditional discussions.

He was eminently successful. The 17 nations were silenced. Walter Lippmann, The New York Times, and other critics were, for months following, captives of the deception. The credibility crisis is not unfounded. The burden now rests on your side.

The great disappointment is yourself. The fanfare when you were tapped for the Vice-Presidency was that the ticket would be balanced with a "liberal." You were to be "our man from ADA." Someone on our side was going to be on the inside. But you went so far inside it became a disappearing act.

All I hear now is a feeble seconding of a loud anti-Communist clamor. In its name you call an inexplicable war one of honor; in the name of the war, you readily apply the anti-Red tactic at home. If you were not the Vice-President, I would not care. But you came with special credentials. You are not merely a partner to what's going on. (I am that because I am a citizen.) You are a leader—and the direction is down.

Respectfully,
STANLEY K. SHEINBAUM

Letters:

SIRS:

It saddens one to see that one of the great minds of our time—Arnold Toynbee—is capable of being illogical (RAMPARTS, December 1965). He does not differentiate between individuals becoming Communists of their own free will, which is true quite often (poor imbeciles!), and a whole nation going Communist of its own free will, which has never yet happened by a free election anywhere, but has always been imposed upon a people by terror of a minority rule.

LIA SMITS
New York City

SIRS:

As a senior naval officer's wife whose husband frequents the corridors of the Pentagon, I take angry exception to Robert Scheer's article, "The Winner's War" (RAMPARTS, December 1965).

In the first place Mr. Scheer's article is unsupported by fact. The Assistant Secretary of Defense happens to be a civilian, not an admiral. The admiral Mr. Scheer quotes so freely, but does not name, does not hold that title. Could it be he refrained from naming him because everything the admiral said was taken out of context? Mr. Scheer comments that the lights blaze all night in the Pentagon. Did it ever occur to him that when busy admirals have to stop what they are doing to answer ridiculous questions, they must put in late hours? I learned that Mr. Scheer was treated with the utmost respect and politeness and I am amazed that he was.

Who does Mr. Scheer think he's kidding by such an article? Could it be he hopes to enlist more peace marchers who have done nothing for this country except prove their gullibility to swallow any Red propaganda tinted with Catholic, Christian commitment, or moral overtones?

To say we are turning our backs on atrocities committed by the South Vietnamese just as the Nazis did makes it pretty obvious where Mr. Scheer's sentiments are. The statement is assinine. Why does he think we turn prisoners over to the South Vietnamese in the first place? He certainly manages to skip a lot of details. These people have known 20 years of suffering and they know what to expect from the Viet Cong. They also are well aware of the tortures these so-called "poor prisoners" have inflicted upon their own countrymen.

If any American prisoners are treated well by the Viet Cong it is for one reason only, that they may be released to spew propaganda just as they recently exhibited. But where, Mr. Scheer, are the prisoners captured with these released men? You can be damn sure if they refuse to be brainwashed, they're dead, since dead men tell no tales.

And why does Mr. Scheer fail to cite the courage of Americans like Marine Colonel Michael Yunck who lost a leg because he hesitated to bomb a village after seeing the Viet Cong holding women and children as hostages? Many more millions saw his raw courage on TV than will ever read Mr. Scheer's article. Nevertheless, such an article must be refuted. For a magazine

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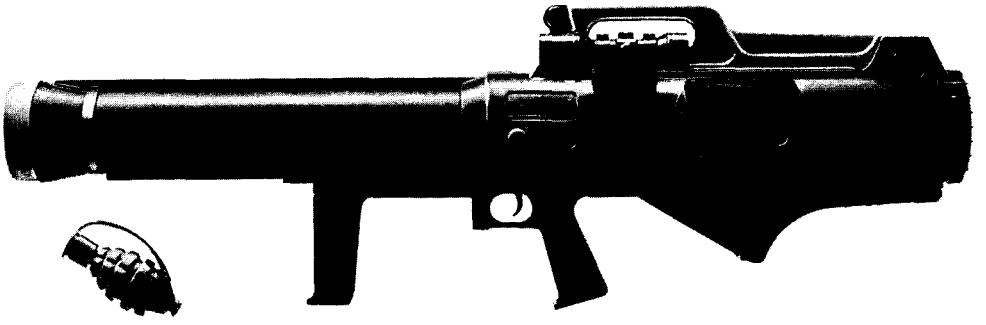
Give Now! Help American Efforts In Vietnam!
You May Win $100!



CONTEST:

Will Yours Be War Toy of the Week?

In the public service, an event sponsored by The Committee:
Helping collect war toys for our Pentagon.

Reviewing Mr. Johnson's efforts in his struggle for peace, we were moved by this news item:

Pentagon Orders Air Drop of Toys To Viet Children

Washington

A shrewd move. After all, there is evidence the American image is declining.

Toys Will Help

Our leaders feel toys will help; for, our Pentagon reasons that toys will brighten the children's days and demonstrate our concern.

But what sort of toys? Barbie Dolls would clearly be in poor taste. Toy Cadillacs likewise. What then would Mr. Johnson, or say, General Westmoreland send? Training toys! They would doubtless choose toys to help train the young Viet for the life he can expect under our guidance.

Cash Prizes!

So, this contest (with cash prizes) is being held to collect toys of the kind our leaders would prefer.

For example, the plastic bazooka (pictured above) costs $11.00 and shoots a blast of air capable of dismantling cardboard structures at 40 feet. Auxiliary features are a three-stage rocket, a shoulder recoil pad, and a target which collapses when hit.

For the training of children on how to do-in the enemy, we doubt it has a peer.

Your Favorite

But then, you too have a favorite which might win First Prize, and it needn't be specific to Vietnam. As the salesgirl in the toy store told us, "These toys are good for ten years, and you never know who the enemy will be by then."

Napalm

You may want to enter the atomic tank which ejects napalm, thereby scorching the crops and starving the enemy ($11.95) or, the emergency hospital kit, featuring crutches, plasma, bandages, and stethoscope (only $1.20 plus tax) or maybe your taste runs to toys which train for jungle warfare.

Enter Now!

Whatever your special favorite enter our contest now. Deposit your toy at The Committee, 622 Broadway, during the next three weeks and become eligible for the War Toy of the Week prize, $100.00!

And the greatest satisfaction will be in knowing that on February 28 at Noon, we will deliver your entry and all others we collect, directly to the people to whom they will mean the most... our Pentagon Generals.

Delivery Device

Our delivery device will be parachute from a helicopter and can you think of a more apt one, considering the recipients? For our Pentagon Generals, removed as they are from the excitement of battle—consigned to mere statistics and the deciding of who will live and who will die—this should provide at least some of the thrill gifts delivered this way can bring.

Let Us Continue

So let us continue. And if you worry that a Vietnam accord will be reached before we can deliver our gift, remember there is always the Dominican Republic.

CONTEST RULES AND REGULATIONS

Entries must all be war toys and will be accepted February 1-20, between 6 and 11 P.M., excluding Mondays. They become the property of The Committee and will be used solely for purposes of delivery to The Pentagon. Mail entries accepted. Each Sunday evening during this period, a weekly winner of $100 will be selected by The Committee cast and announced. In case of ties prize will be divided. Entries will be judged on the basis of originality and aptness of thought. **For Ramparts readers: a special judging will also be held on April 3, for Ramparts entries.**

622 Broadway San Francisco EX 2-0807

The Committee

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that speaks of objective reporting, I find Mr. Scheer's article anything but objective.

The Constitution is clear about giving "aid and comfort to the enemy" and Mr. Scheer has done just this as has every peace marcher who came to Washington. And whether we would have it so or not, the Viet Cong *are our enemies*. Before we ever set foot in Korea, Vietnam or the Dominican Republic, the Communists (under any name) are our enemies dedicated to destroy the freedoms Mr. Scheer now enjoys. To say this isn't so, to say we can do business with them, is to be an ostrich.

As a Catholic with two young sons, I say I'd rather see them dead than refuse to serve this country. And I'd rather never have any grandchildren at all than to some day have them ask (possibly while waiting to be decapitated), "Why didn't you do something to stop them?"

MRS. D. C. REDGRAVE III
Arlington, Virginia

SIRS:

In the December 1965 issue of RAMPARTS ("Collaring the Bishops" by Rev. Paul Zeller), you mention the necessity of having "authority at the top."

Many of us who try to worship God "in spirit and in truth" find it difficult to accept a Church which has at its head the so-called "Vicar of Christ," designated by Deity to supersede all other authority—religious and temporal.

It would seem that a large religious body needs authority for administrative purposes. But does its head need to be the sovereign ruler of a political government?

If religion is the translation of one's personal experiences, and a matter of one's personal relationship with God, how can His Holiness assume to interpret what God wants and does not want?

This arrogant, presumptious, rigid absolutism is not only opposed to progress and all democratic principles, it leads to total distrust of all things religious.

An end is never justified when it can be achieved only by means of delusion, hypocrisy, and even bloodshed.

HAROLD D. SMITH
Tucson, Arizona

SIRS:

"Death in Kentucky" by David Welsh (RAMPARTS, December 1965) was excellent—comes close to Agee's "Let Us Now Praise Famous Men." Nice job.

MIKE PARKS
New York City

SIRS:

. . . As an added delight, I must compliment your art director, Mr. Stermer, for showing remarkable ingenuity in laying out your magazine, and for providing illustration and typographical selection of the highest quality. As a graphics person, I truly appreciate such visual handling of a magazine.

DAVE EPSTEIN
New York City

SIRS:

Writers appearing in RAMPARTS use the term "Viet Cong" in discussions of the Vietnam war. "Viet Cong" is an epithet with a richness of meaning somewhere between "Commie" and "Nigger" as used in the United States. Do you and your writers wish to insult these valiant brown-skinned men who have fought so hard for 30 years for their freedom and independence, all the while honoring agreements which white men make and break? I hope you do not wish to insult them. More correct terms are readily available, for example, National Liberation Front, or National Front of Liberation, or NLF.

RAYMOND W. WIEDMAN
Palo Alto, California

SIRS:

Regarding December's covers, I personally favored the front to the back (Supersam). Why? An inquisitive look at the front uncovers the forceful message of soldiers defrosting. The picture of Supersam did not bring home the bacon nearly so well.

WAYNE HALLADAY
San Jose, California

Art Director's Note: Our informal reader's poll showed an overwhelming preference for the front cover. Thanks.

SIRS:

I have just seen "ImpPress NonSense" in the current issue of RAMPARTS (January 1966). I was interested, amused and impressed—the latter particularly by your skillful use of color. As a private printer, my attention is caught by unusual bits like this one . . . .

One thing is not clear: is there more to "ImpPress NonSense" than these few pages? That is, is there really a complete book in print?

WILLIAM M. JOHNSON
Portland, Oregon

SIRS:

May I have the opportunity of expressing my dissatisfaction with the lengthy review, or rather exploitation, of *Atomic Diplomacy* by Gar Alperovitz and *The Free World Colossus* by David Horowitz (RAMPARTS, December 1965), in which Carl Marzani reveals far more of himself than he does the books in question.

With unbelievable crudeness, Mr. Marzani reminds us that Alperovitz and Horowitz were children when he was writing his study of the Cold War, a hash of quotations and journalese naïvely called *We Can Be Friends*, to which he refers as "a broad and documented essay," in contrast to a "detailed history," such as D. F. Fleming's *The Cold War And Its Origins*.

He then roams from Yalta to Vietnam, not failing to touch on Cuba and Poland along the way, quoting here, there and everywhere, in and out of context, but never straying very far from *We Can Be Friends*, while completely ignoring the ostensible purpose of the review for seven full columns.

At long last Mr. Marzani comes to recognize his surroundings momentarily (for they can serve him again), and makes a passing reference to Prof. Horowitz' book: "Professor Horowitz' book brings the history of the Cold War up to 1965." He then drops Horowitz for Alperovitz to "vindicate" his own theory that the Atom Bomb was exploded to cow the Soviet Union and not to effect a surrender of the Japanese. Since Marzani credits Prof. Blackett of England for pointing this out back in 1946, the notion that vindication is called for is patently absurd.

Marzani, unfortunate and courageous victim of McCarthyism that he was, uses the experience to patronize—the sort of nonsense one has come to expect from the discredited American Marxist.

SHALE DWORAN
New York City

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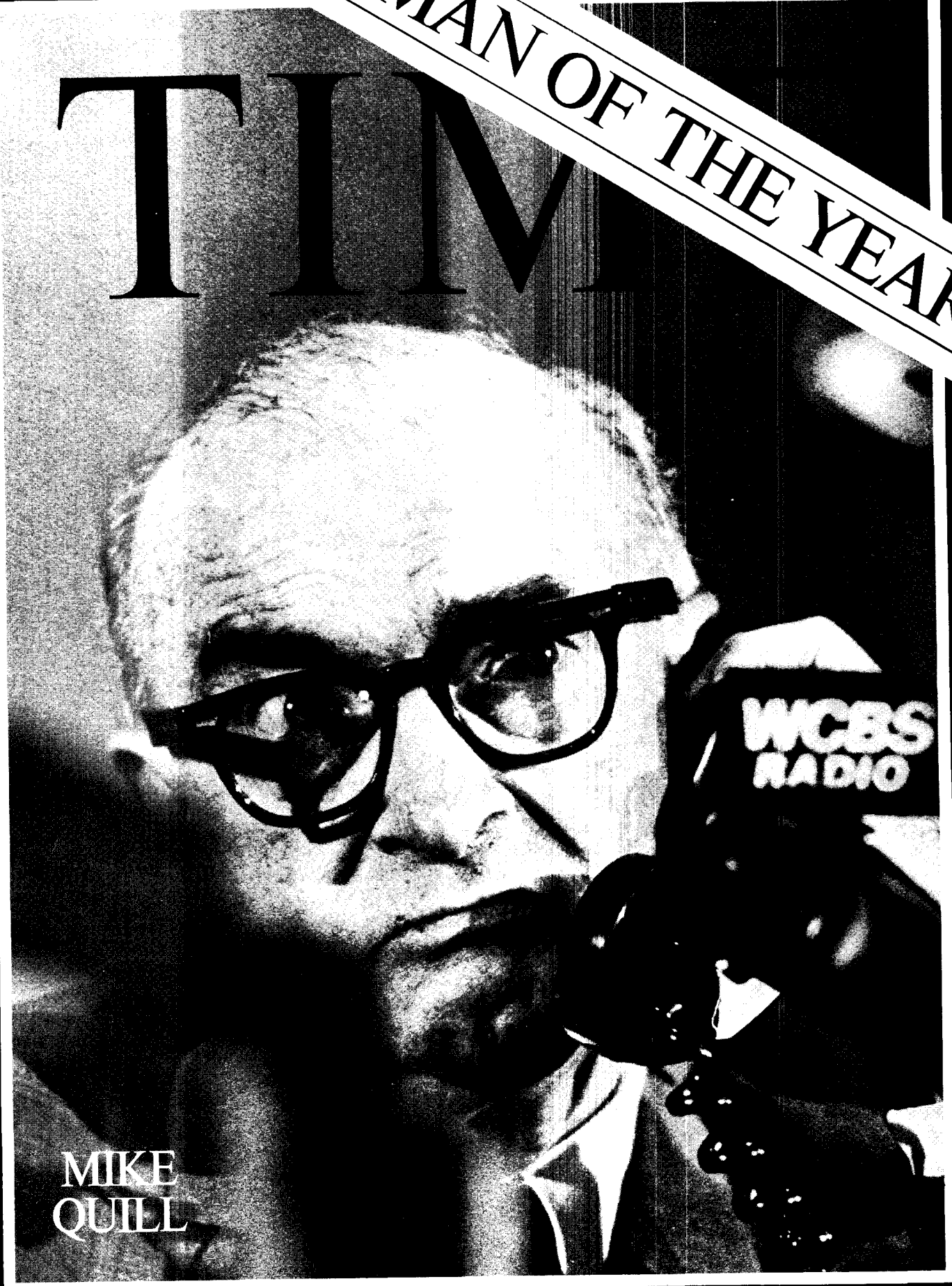
TIME

MAN OF THE YEAR



MIKE
QUILL

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"The judge can drop dead in his black robes." It was the old Mike Quill, bellowing out, "I won't play ball if you're going to fix the game."

Some of us remember Mike Quill years ago when he was councilman from the Bronx, denouncing the bosses in his deep Irish brogue from the top of a loudspeaker truck. "One of these days us people in the Bronx are going to control the Bronx," he would say with a threatening wave of his cane.

He'd come a long way since then. Many say he sold out, that he succumbed to the cult of reasonableness. There is a stultifying reasonableness running through our whole society. Everyone is supposed to conform meekly to the same overall plan, as if we all had the same interests in common. Everybody is supposed to be a statesman. There are Labor Statesmen, Business Statesmen, John Lindsay Statesmen, Roy Wilkins Statesmen, even Gambler Statesmen like Scarne and Drug Addict Statesmen like the people at Synanon and Jailbird Statesmen who "cooperate" by ratting on fellow inmates. Statesmen operate on the theory that even if the game is rigged, I'll play ball and maybe you'll cut me in. 'Thirties Germany was full of statesmen; it was fairly bursting with reasonable men with the proper reverence for authority.

Perhaps this time Mike Quill remembered the Bronx, remembered that it is the unreasonable men who usually get things done in society. Like John L. Lewis during the war, he must have said to himself, "I'm no Labor Statesman, I'm a trade unionist," and then proceeded to tell them all to go to hell. Bad Boy Mike Quill made the system crack — just a little.

The Strike that Nobody Understood

by Gene Marine

"Mayor Lindsay looked at Mike Quill and saw the past; Mike Quill looked at John Lindsay and saw the Church of England."
—Jimmy Breslin, New York Herald Tribune

NEW YORK CITY has six general-circulation daily newspapers in English (seven with The Wall Street Journal), one of which is frequently described as the world's best and another of which claims to have discovered a whole new approach to journalism. It has six commercial VHF television stations and as many radio stations as can be crowded onto the AM and FM dials, including one which broadcasts but news (and commercials) 24 hours a day.

With all this help, chances are that during the recent, much-publicized transit strike, not three people out of any random group of fifty would even have claimed to understand the issues involved. And as for what the strike was *really* about — well, we'll get to that.

On one level — and, in fact, the most important level to the 36,000 strikers — the issues were simple in form, if complex in detail. The strikers wanted not merely more money, but more money governed by a principle. Their wages were lower than those of city employees doing comparable work (subway and bus workers are employed by the Transit Authority — a technically autonomous body — rather than by the City of New York). As an example, a mechanic employed by the city is paid $4.40 per hour; a mechanic doing comparable work for the Transit Authority, before the strike, got $3.46.

In addition, the workers asked "parity" with city employees on some other matters, notably pension provisions, and some other improvements in their lot,

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including, for example, relief from the necessity of buying their own uniforms (at about $100 each). The Transit Authority, on the other hand, had an even simpler position: We can't afford it. To which the Union replied: Why should *we* subsidize a subway and bus system for 8,000,000 New Yorkers? On New Year's Eve — contract expiration night — the Transit Authority made its first counteroffer to the Union's demands. TWU head Mike Quill and his fellow negotiators found it far too low, and there was a strike.

EVEN ON THIS SIMPLE LEVEL, New York's communications media, models for the world, proved less than diligent about the clarity of their reporting. Most can claim, in fairness, that somewhere, sometime, they reported every fact at least once — in a quotation at the bottom of page 37, for example. But informing the public is something else again.

The New York Times (famous for its fair coverage of newspaper disputes) printed a daily box "summarizing" the strike issues. In every edition it began by saying that the TWU's first demand was for a two-year package, the cost of which would total $680 million. Later, the Times said, the Union reduced its demands to $180 million, and on December 31 the Transit Authority counteroffered $25 million.

But nowhere in that daily box did the Times note that $680 million was the Transit Authority's version of what the Union's demands would cost — a version that economist Leon Keyserling, hired by the Union, described as "preposterous" and as "two or three times too high." The final settlement is estimated at from $43 million to $70 million.

Incidentally, after the strike — on January 16 — Transit Authority member John J. Gilhooley was asked (on all-news radio station WINS) why the Transit Authority waited until the last day to make any offer at all. If any reporter asked this question before or during the strike, it escaped me. Gilhooley's impassioned answer was that the Union's demands were so high that any Transit Authority offer would have sounded ridiculous.

ALSO, AFTER THE STRIKE, the New York press has had a ball with a conflict between Mayor John Lindsay and President Johnson over whether the settlement of the subway strike was "inflationary," or exceeded the Administration's 3.2 per cent "guidelines" (the quick idea of which is that the American worker's productivity goes up about 3.2 per cent a year, so that increasing his wages by that much isn't really a raise at all, and therefore isn't inflationary). Nowhere is anybody noting the fact that from 1955 to 1965, the transit worker's annual wage increases have averaged only 2.7 per cent. The 1966 agreement would have had to give a wage increase of 6.53 per cent to make it equal a yearly 3.2 per cent since 1955. The aforementioned Transit Authority mechanic, given a 6.53 per cent raise, would still be making about 71 cents an hour less than his colleague who works for the city.

And besides, there are problems that percentages don't meet. Prior to the strike settlement, the transit worker's average wage for a year was $6,229, which means, of course, that a lot of them made less. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics has a figure for what it takes a family of four to live with reasonable decency: $6,542. The Community Council of Greater New York has a similar figure, adjusted to the city's cost of living: $6,715. So much for the simplest level — before and after the strike. There is also a potential level of understanding so complex as to be totally forbidding. A Kansas murder case furnished Truman Capote with the basis for a "non-fiction novel." The New York subway strike would furnish him a non-fiction *Comédie Humaine*.

Really to understand the subway strike, it would be necessary to understand the whole complex world of New York labor, in which the most honest and militant of labor leaders work alongside (and sometimes in conjunction with) the slimiest of racketeers, in which vigorous defenders of political dissent and civil rights work one day with jingoists and with racists the next.

It would be necessary to know the inmost strivings of the hearts of John Lindsay and Nelson Rockefeller and Robert Kennedy, and of dozens of men of less prominence. It would be necessary to recall the intricate and strife-ridden inner story of Mike Quill and the TWU. It would be necessary to understand the structure of the governments of and in New York City — a task which, phrased even in high school civics-book terms, would tax the language.

The absence of this kind of understanding makes it possible for both the antagonists and the media to mislead, to oversimplify, to do more damage to the public interest than can any strike.

IN ADDITION, THERE ARE PERIPHERAL QUESTIONS: the action of the Transit Authority in moving to enjoin Quill, eight other Union leaders, and the Union from conducting an "illegal" strike, for instance. The public was easily confused into believing that an anti-Union judge issued the injunction and ordered Quill's jailing — but he didn't. What he did was issue an order for Quill and the others to be jailed *when and as the Transit Authority wanted it done*, assuming only that a strike was indeed ordered.

Photographs by Black Star

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As it happens, the jailing played into Quill's hands. A divided membership, mostly critical of past settlements for their inadequacy and of Quill for not getting more, saw him jailed for his militancy. A divided labor movement was put into a position where it *had* to oppose an anti-labor injunction and the jailing of labor leaders. Even anti-strike, anti-Quill labor men — like David Dubinsky of the Ladies' Garment Workers and Alex Rose of the Millinery Workers — were at least partially neutralized in public.

Dubinsky and Rose, and a few other labor men who are close to them, are — as leaders of the Liberal Party — the principal labor advisors to Mayor Lindsay, who was the Liberal as well as the Republican candidate for mayor last year. At least some knowledgeable labor officials "credit" the Dubinsky-Rose circle with inspiring both the anti-labor injunction and Lindsay's speech of January 10 — of which more later.

In any case, the complexities of the situation made it relatively easy for the "information" media to portray the strike as a high-noon struggle between Quill and Lindsay: the young, dashing, incorruptible mayor in his white hat; the uncouth, contemptuous labor boss in his black one. WINS reporters, interviewing New Yorkers on the street on the first day of the strike and recording the chronicles of individual inconvenience, invariably asked with feigned camaraderie, "What do you think of Mike Quill now?" — as though Quill, personally, had just decided to have a subway strike, all by himself.

The Herald Tribune's Jimmy Breslin did even better, portraying Quill as a querulous old man still obsessed with the Dublin transit strike of 1915, and Lindsay as Contemporary Managerial Man, super-competent, as impatient as a computer with human foible and human need: "John Lindsay looked at Mike Quill and saw the past; Mike Quill looked at John Lindsay and saw the Church of England."

THUS, QUILL'S TELEVISED TEARING UP of the injunction became first a personal defiance of Lindsay and second a symbolic defiance of the contemporary sophisticated law-abiding world. Only in labor circles was it recognized that after several moderate — actually inadequate — settlements in the past, Quill found himself at the head of a mutinous organization, so that another too-low settlement would mean not only rebellion but fragmentation of the Union. The televised defiance — "bad public relations" as far as the citizenry-at-large was concerned — was aimed solely at his own TWU members, whose response was to say to themselves and to one another, "Well, good — Mike's finally getting tough."

Rush hour on the Brooklyn Bridge . . .

Certainly the strike made life inconvenient for New Yorkers — and it cost some of them some money. Department stores suffered serious losses; but they'll recover with time, and anyway department stores don't need a quart of milk a day to feed their kids. More important was the suffering of small businessmen, and of workers who couldn't get to jobs (some of them in department stores) or who got there to find no work to be done.

Remarkable, incidentally — it seems to be impossible to discuss the subway strike at less than book length without frequent asides — is the number of "liberals" and intellectuals, accustomed to criticizing the labor movement for its postwar obesity and lack of militancy, who, suddenly faced with a real strike that hurt, became champions of the poor who couldn't get to work, the ghetto-bound who couldn't get downtown. Nobody seems to have noticed that the TWU has no strike fund, pays no strike benefits. Bad off as many New Yorkers were during the strike, the strikers were worst off of all. And a lot of *them* live in ghettos, too.

Lindsay admitted that he was considering asking the governor to call out the National Guard to drive buses, to "serve the poor areas." Unlike some of those whose concern for the poor so suddenly blossomed, he at least is new enough on the local scene to be immune from the accusation that his concern for the poor has both a convenient timing and a distinct air of the temporary. The concern of some others for the poor was reflected in the post-strike statement of the Commerce and Industry Association, calling for an immediate increase in the subway fare from 15 to 25 cents.

What no one is saying since the strike, of course, is that those same "working poor" may be, aside from the transit workers themselves, the principal long-run benefici-

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. . . and on the I.R.T.

aries of the strike. If they work, they work at the legal minimum of $1.25 an hour (or in some cases less: hotel and laundry workers, for example, are exempt). They work in unorganized shops and plants, or in shops and plants whose labor contracts are with unions more concerned with dues collections than workers' welfare.

Lindsay made clear the extent of his concern for such workers and his understanding of their plight in his speech of January 10, after 15,000 workers had demonstrated at City Hall in support of the strike. He described his own history as a congressman willing to fight for labor legislation, and then condemned the strike as irresponsible and illegal. Every labor leader in New York — probably including Dubinsky and Rose — made the easy translation: We, the New York Establishment, are all for organized labor, as long as it stays in its place.

GEORGE MEANY STUCK HIS HEAD in long enough to offer his "help" and pointedly to praise Mayor Lindsay, thus making it clear where *he* stood. In support of the strike in high labor councils were such unions as the typographers (whose leader, Bertram Powers, is the perennial villain of New York newspaper negotiations); the militant District 65 (mostly unskilled workers, including many Negroes and Puerto Ricans); Local 1199 of the Drug and Hospital Workers (whose president, Leon Davis, was jailed last year in an analogous situation during an equally "illegal" hospital strike); and the few others who have continued to insist on staying outside of a cozy elite. To his credit, Central Labor Council President Harry Van Arsdale, an electrician, also backed the strike, privately as well as publicly.

Lindsay's speech, and the arguments inside the labor movement, made plain what was at stake in the subway strike: the question of what kind of labor movement New York is going to have.

On the one hand, a vast bloc of powerful New Yorkers — ranging from the Chase Manhattan Bank (New York's symbol of affluent conservatism) to labor men like Dubinsky — really want a polite, acquiescent, humble labor movement: one happy to have its leaders take tea with other Establishmentarians, happy to collect its dues on check-off from $1.25-an-hour workers or their skilled equivalents, happy to work out its demands in consultation with the President's economic advisors.

On the other hand, there are still those — despite the cynicism that most Americans, even of militant background, have about today's labor movement — whose concern is for the workers, who remember that advancement is a struggle, who know that there is no strike that was not once "illegal" (until labor gained sufficient power to win a cloak of legality) and no important gain that did not bring down on leadership the full force of community anathema.

Or, in Mike Quill's words:

> *It is about time that someone, somewhere along the road, ceases to be respectable. Many generations of great Americans before us have taken this road, and if they didn't take this road, half of you would be on home relief.*

A few minutes after he said that, Mike Quill was led to jail. And that is what New York's subway strike was really about.

Gene Marine, a New York City labor writer, has appeared in The Nation and other journals of opinion.

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THOREAU and the Paralysis of Individualism

by Truman Nelson

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The accursed question in Thoreau's day, that issue that every man in his time has to make a choice of confronting or going around, was the peculiar institution of chattel slavery. The personality in which the resistance to it was most perfectly seated was John Brown, the first white American to attack slavery with force and violence on the soil where it existed and with a combined armed group of black men and whites. He went up against this tyranny so that it had to give way to him or he to it. This, as Thoreau said, "distinguished him from every other reformer I know."

In the midst of the shock waves from Harper's Ferry Thoreau also distinguished himself from all other reformers by speaking out in Brown's defense. The chronology of his stand is highly significant. It took place *before* Brown had had his day in court and had aroused the country with that great affirmation of his purpose and character which, like an unexpected flash of summer lightning, made incandescent the acts, meditations and resolves that made up the totality of his life — and inevitably made his death a martyrdom.

As Thoreau spoke, the Republican Party, staking its future on a policy of slavery containment, vociferously condemned the deed. The Liberator, after thrumming incessantly for over a quarter of a century that the slave must be free, called it a misguided, wild and insane effort. On all sides, the most liberal people were drawing aside in holy horror, declaring they didn't do it, or countenance him to do it, in any conceivable way.

Immediately after the sensational and distorted reports of the raid filled the papers, Thoreau's journal began to blaze with anger over the abuse and defamation poured from all quarters on John Brown. He told himself, and later some others, that he knew a little about Captain Brown and that he wanted to correct the tone and the errors in the press and on the lips of his neighbors and countrymen respecting the Captain's character and action. "It costs us nothing to be just," he said. "We can at least express our sympathy with, and admiration of, him and his companions, and that is what I now propose to do . . . as for his recent failure," he added, truthfully, a little later, "we do not know the facts about it."

The cost of justice to others was not then as high as it is now, with our new concept of guilt by association, but I imagine there are still a few men around who would do the same today for someone in a similar plight — defend a man's *character* against common accusations without knowing the *facts*. It was a temperate and fair-minded statement of purpose, but this temperance did not long continue. A few paragraphs later he was proclaiming that the event was a touchstone bringing out with glaring distinctness the character of the government. "I see now it was necessary that the bravest and humanest man in all the country should be hung. If any leniency were shown him, any compromise made with him, any treating with him at all, he might be suspected. And furthermore, I rejoice that I live in this age, that I am his contemporary . . . and all in all, it is the best news I ever had."

This is most curious for a man who did not know the facts, a man who had scarcely been known to praise another human being before, who had spent a lifetime observing with meticulous accuracy the life cycle of a leaf, who would squat, patient and immobile for hours, to shake hands with a woodchuck. Is it not curious that this fastidious and accurate man should say these things of a man in chains and self-condemned of treason and murder — or at least, of killing? If there are any doubts that Thoreau rejected non-resistance and passive resistance, his position toward John Brown has blasted them forever.

MILLIONS OF TOILING GRADUATE STUDENTS have speculated on what Thoreau meant when he said he had lost a hound, a bay horse and a turtledove. There has been little speculation on what is a real mystery, in the light of contemporary value judgments, his considered opinion of John Brown as "a man of rare common sense and directness of speech, as of action, a transcendentalist above all, a man of ideas and principles . . . that was what distinguished him. Not yielding to a whim or transient impulse but carrying out the purpose of a life."

In many ways, the best description of Henry Thoreau comes in Emerson's marvelously perceptive lecture on transcendentalism in 1842. I think it really *made* Thoreau. It was nature imitating art. Emerson described the transcendentalist as believing, first of all, that "You may think me a child of circumstances: I make my own circum-

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stance." The perfectibility of man became the perfectibility of him. The transcendentalist was lonely, he shunned society as imperfect, as evil. "He who so goes to walk alone, accuses the world." Unlike John Brown, he never planned. Everything had to be instinctive and new. "I do not wish to do one thing but once. I do not love routine."

But when he did act, that action could be revolutionary. To illustrate this, Emerson quotes Jacobi, who: "would assassinate like Timoleon; would perjure myself like Epaminondas and John de Witt. I would resolve on suicide like Cato; I would commit sacrilege with David; yea, and pluck corn of the Sabbath, for no other reason than that I was suffering from lack of food. For I have assurance in myself, that, in pardoning those faults according to the letter, man exerts the sovereign rights which the majesty of his being confers on him."

With this sort of eloquence and self-deception, transcendentalism conferred on individualism a morality it did not deserve. For every action based on one man's "sovereign rights" is bound to debase the sovereign rights of another man. Actually, very few transcendentalists ever acted at all, and this is the reason why they did not: because they knew *all* acts are invasive of others. If they did, sooner or later they had a failure of nerve, and without a real plan which had allowed for this invasion and its reaction, their acts became an exercise in futility. Finally, in combat with slavery, they learned to organize and plan, instead of going by Christ's rule to take no thought for the morrow. They began to realize that transcendentalism could be more than an exalted private whim, could become a very pure and optative recognition of the highest human potential.

It was the problem of reaction to the invasion of persons that the transcendentalists had to face in their assessment of John Brown. Brown tried to get people to do what they did not want to do. They fought back and he killed them. Transcendentalism in theory had such respect for the private character of man it would hardly judge him at all, let alone condemn him to death. Transcendentalism, like pure pacifism, was theoretically based on the supreme dignity of the individual man, which included the supreme inviolability of his body against the physical invasion of bloodletting.

"John Brown," says one of the most noted of modern historians, Allan Nevins, speaking for the majority of his fellows, "was an ignorant, narrow-minded, thoroughly selfish egotist, with a vein of hard cruelty and was, in fact, insane and fanatically prejudiced, a religious maniac."

"John Brown," said one of his contemporaries many years afterwards in the New York Sun, "in Kansas, at Pottawatomie, dragged from their beds at midnight, three men and two boys and hacked them in pieces with a two-edged cleaver in such a way that the massacre was reported to be the work of wild animals. If any butcher in New York should hack and slash his own hogs and steers as this man hacked to death these two boys, he would be arrested and imprisoned without delay."

All these things were said, and much worse — that he was at Harper's Ferry to touch off a massive slave insurrection in which every white man, woman and child in the slave country would be in imminent danger of being butchered in the night, in his bed — all these horrible things were being written about John Brown at the precise time Thoreau was saying no man in America had ever stood up so persistently and effectively for the dignity of human nature.

"... *the right of revolution.*"

THOREAU WAS THE FIRST. Then Emerson said the gallows holding John Brown would become a cross. Then Theodore Parker wrote from Italy, "A man held against his will as a slave has a natural right to kill everyone who seeks to prevent his enjoyment of liberty ... A freeman has a natural right to help the slaves recover their liberty, and in that enterprise to do for them all which they have a right to do for themselves ... It may be a natural duty for the freeman to help the slaves to the enjoyment of their liberty, and as means to that end, to aid them in killing all such as oppose their natural freedom."

Parker was a blunter man than Thoreau, and besides he was out of the country, dying in Rome. But could not Thoreau have been in agreement with Parker's revolutionary affirmations? Horace Greeley, in printing Thoreau's incendiary speech (made in Framingham at the time Garrison, on the platform with him, burned the Constitution on a pewter plate), called Thoreau the country's greatest champion of the natural law philosophy, placing him above Sumner, Seward and Chase in this respect. But at Harper's Ferry, Greeley had great reservations about natural law in the revolutionary context, and said Brown was wrong and the freeing of the slave could come about more quickly and decently by "the quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity" without any "outbreak."

How Thoreau pours scorn on this liberalism. *The slave ship is on her way, crowded with its dying victims; new cargoes are being added in midocean; a small crew of slaveholders, countenanced by a large body of passengers, is smothering four millions under the hatches, and yet the politician asserts that the only proper way by which deliverance is to be obtained, is by "the quiet diffusion of the sentiments of humanity" without any "outbreak." As if the sentiments of humanity were ever found unaccompanied by*

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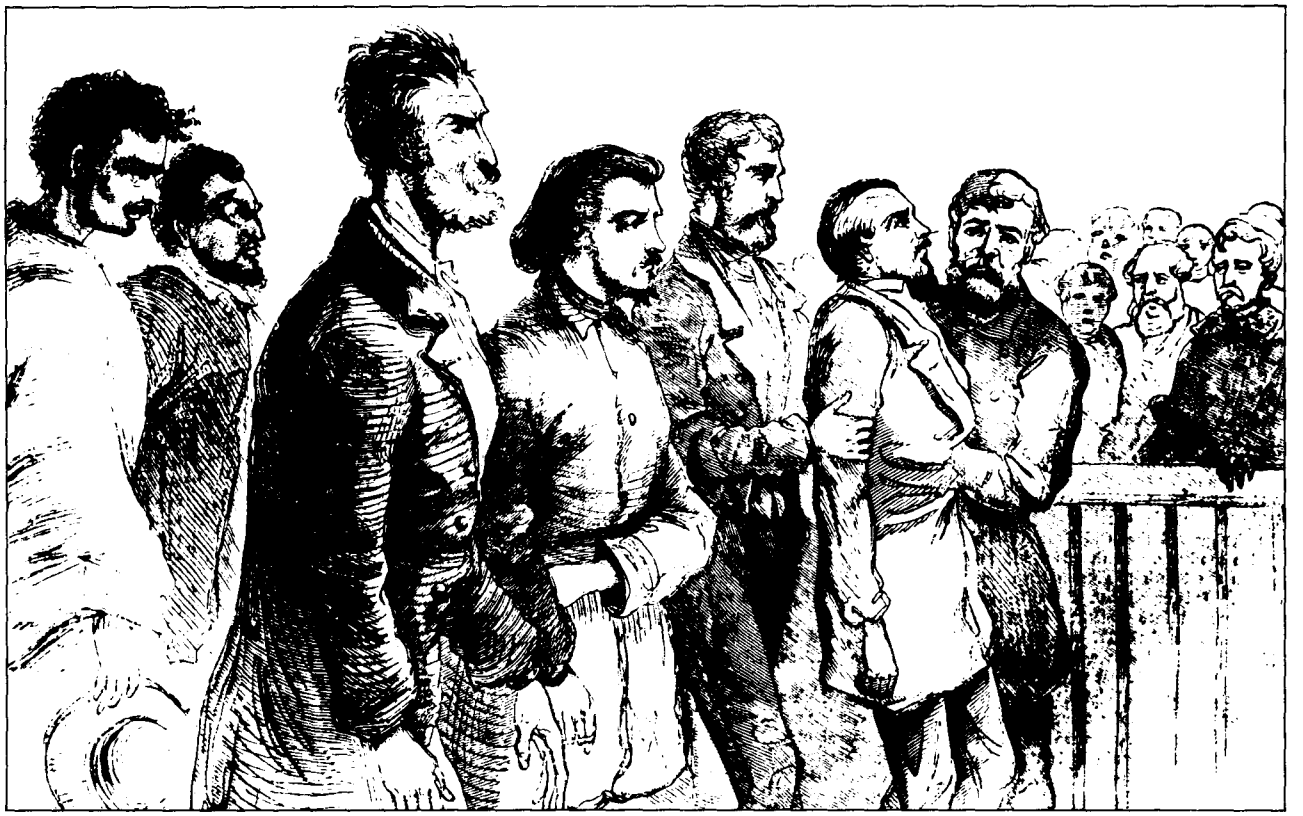

John Brown being led to court with five of his men.

John Brown riding on his coffin to the place of execution.

Engravings by Bettman Archive

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its deeds, and you could disperse them all finished to order, the pure article, as easily as water with a watering-pot and so lay the dust. What is that that I hear cast overboard? The bodies of the dead that have found deliverance. This is the way we are "diffusing" humanity and its sentiments with it.

This is an outcry for the deed, for the revolutionary act. And this is not the first time he did this. I could never understand how writing as full of revolutionary incitements as "Civil Disobedience" can be fed like pap to students without, until recently, causing any noticeable upheavals. It clearly teaches the overthrow of the government. It is subversive under all the present definitions of that very elastic impugnment. He says, "All men recognize the right of revolution," and then adds, "When a sixth of the population which has undertaken to be the refuge of liberty are slaves and a whole country is unjustly overrun and conquered by a foreign army and subjected to military law, I think that it is not too soon for honest men to rebel and revolutionize. What makes this duty the more urgent is the fact that the country so overrun is not ours, but ours is the invading army." What would happen if Thoreau said this today at a Vietnam teach-in?

But something in this essay took the revolutionary edge off it. Its underlying anarchy, perhaps, and individualism. It is so patently a call for individuals to be more so: not to unite against a common enemy with a common program, which is a dangerous thought, but to strive so as to get the State to recognize "the individual as a higher and independent power." But what individual? What *kind* of individual? One can be an individual like John Bunyan and sit in jail for acting against the State and write *Pilgrim's Progress*. Or like Hitler and write *Mein Kampf*. One can be a radical, a severe critic of the *status quo* in the context of individualism, but one cannot be a revolutionary without having connections with like-minded dissenters in the mass, wherever they are in upheaval, and fighting in line with them.

Thoreau submitted meekly to the force used by Sam Staples in placing him under lock and key in Concord jail. There is no recorded outcry. And when he got out in the morning, it was because, as he complained, "someone interfered" and paid the tax. He had performed an act of defiance as an individualist, leaving others to join him or not at the prompting of their individual consciences, or their inner lights. There was no reason, he felt, for him to do as his neighbors did; but by the same token, there was reason for them to do what he did. Thus, principle is canceled out. So he remained, in his first encounter with the accursed question, the completely self-orbed transcendentalist-individualist, marching to the drum he heard, in the direction his inner self laid out.

In his next great polemic, spoken at the anti-slavery meeting at Framingham (July 4, 1854), he shows, I feel, profound revolutionary growth. He sees now that it is not only the uniformed and formal State which functions as a repressive force, but that the Church and press act upon our minds in the same way the State confronts our bodies. Twelve Massachusetts men were in jail in Boston for attempting to rescue a slave, Anthony Burns, on the eve of his return to his master in Virginia under the terms of the Fugitive Slave Law. These men, incited by Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker and Samuel Gridley Howe, and led by Thomas Wentworth Higginson (who escaped arrest), had broken down the door of the Boston Courthouse where the slave was confined and had then been driven off by deputy sheriffs. One of the deputies was killed. The men (five of them Negroes) were either accused of murder, or arrested for murder. The grand jury had not yet indicted them. They had acted.

"... assault ... and the Church."

AMERICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY has been so adept, in recent years, at cutting our sinews to our own revolutionary past, and the New Critics so successful in exorcising every vestige of "statement" and politics from our "literature," that not one reader in a thousand knows what Thoreau was actually talking about in his Framingham speech, aptly titled "Slavery in Massachusetts." Thoreau was angry; he was intemperately furious because the twelve men who had tried to rescue the slave with axes and meat cleavers were still in a Massachusetts jail and no one was trying to get them out. This is what he meant by *slavery in Massachusetts!* All the Massachusetts liberals wanted to talk about was something happening a thousand miles off in Kansas. Thoreau compared the assault on the Courthouse to the action at Lexington Green.

Instead, this time, of being anti-State, he complains that although he has read recently of a state law making it a crime for any state officer to detain a fugitive slave, this law was broken. And although a writ of replevin has been secured by the slave's sympathizers, which could have legally taken him from the custody of the federal marshal, it "could not be served, for want of sufficient force to aid the officer." He castigates the governor for not supplying this force. Was that not his duty as the executive officer of the state? He is useless, or worse than useless then, if he permits the law to go unexecuted. Thoreau is now *for the law*, for its physical enforcement at the point of a gun. What was wrong was that the state put its military force into the service of the slaveholder and the Federal government! He asks indignantly why Massachusetts has been training these soldiers in the arts of violence if they cannot save a citizen of Massachusetts from

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being kidnapped? Thus, militarism itself is permissible if used for a purpose of which Thoreau approves.

As for individualism, this time he would rather trust to the "united sentiment of the people." The judge could decide this way or that; his opinion was only "the trammeled judgment of an individual, of no significance, be it which way it might." In fact, the people, *en masse*, should go behind the courts, as the imprisoned twelve did, for "the law will never make me free, it is men who have got to make the law free. They are lovers of law and order, who observe the law when the government breaks it."

Thoreau was speaking here of a specific law, not some vague concept of "natural law." He was saying that the Federal government had no right to enforce the Fugitive Slave Law against a state statute restricting it and that the men attacking the Courthouse were carrying out a proper function of the Massachusetts government. He then offered a concrete program, not for individualists, because it strikes directly at the right of private judgment, editorially speaking. "Among measures to be adopted, I would suggest to make as earnest and vigorous an assault on the press as had already been made, and with effect, on the Church." What happens here to the infinitudes of the private man? As a preacher? As an editor? He is a dead duck. "The freemen of New England have only to refrain from purchasing and reading these sheets, have only to withhold their cents, to kill a score of them at once." The editors and preachers, as well as politicians, are wrong because they are totally concerned with "the mismanagement of wood and iron and stone." And that in combination they act upon the consciousness of the people of Massachusetts until they are brought ignobly to say, "Do what you will, O Government, with my wife and children, my mother and brother, my father and sister, I will obey your commands to the letter."

Against this stultification, this moral paralysis, this slavery, Thoreau utters one of the most violent statements ever written, or spoken before a mass audience: "Rather than do this, I need not say what match I would touch, what system endeavor to blow up; but as I love my life, I would side with the light, and let the dark earth roll from under me, calling my mother and brother to follow."

No one had bombs for him to throw.

THERE IS NO TELLING what would have happened to Thoreau as a writer and as a man if he had been approached directly after his inflammatory speech by some of the breed of youth we see around today on picket lines, sit-ins, sleep-ins, teach-ins, traveling perilously to Mississippi or Cuba. If some of these, in the blue jeans and sneakers of that day, had come and said, "Like man, we want to enforce the law when the government breaks it," he might have been, in the realm of action, a little more than Captain of a Huckleberry Party. At least, for once, he would have had a direct reply to one of his rare collective proposals.

But no answer came to his "Slavery in Massachusetts" and this element of failure must be taken into consideration in explaining some of the misanthropy of the later years. He was always unlucky in his audiences — devout pacifists — themselves locked in the violence versus nonviolence dilemma plaguing and, I feel, paralyzing the civil rights movement today. No one there had any cannon fuses for him to touch a match to, nor any bombs for him to throw.

Again and again, after the Anthony Burns case in 1854, the North, largely against "slavery in the abstract," went down to defeat when pitted against the simple-minded racism of the white South. This plunged Thoreau further into a long period of discouragement and despair.

His state of mind at this time is clearly revealed in a letter to his English friend, Thomas Cholmondeley. "There has not been anything which you could call union between the North and South in this country for many years, and there cannot be so long as slavery is in the way. I only wish the Northern . . . that any men . . . were better material, or that I for one had more skill to deal with them: that the North had more spirit and would settle the question at once, and here instead of struggling feebly and protractedly away off on the plains of Kansas." In another paragraph he writes: "I dwell as much aloof from society as ever: find it just as impossible to agree in opinion with the most intelligent of my neighbors."

HERE IS Thoreau's fatal contradiction full-blown. In one vein he wants to arouse, he wants to lead, he wants to help settle the great struggle of his time, by force if necessary, and in the other he proclaims himself an avowed recluse, unable to share a common opinion with anyone. His perceptive friend, Cholmondeley, seemed to feel that the societal side of Thoreau was struggling for expression. "You are not living altogether as I could wish," he replied. "You ought to have society. You should be a member of a society not yet formed. You want it greatly and without this you will be liable to moulder away as you get older . . . Your love for, and intimate acquaintance with, Nature is ancillary to some affection which you have not yet discovered . . . take up every man as you would take up a leaf, and look attentively at him."

Thoreau had already tried this and it had not worked. He rejected all money and land grubbers out of hand. This ruled out the majority of his neighbors. Men of

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sufficiently ethical bent were either voting abolitionists, and he was opposed to voting, or Garrisonian pacifists, love-alls, whose tendency to "cuddle up and lie spoon fashion with you" outraged him. He liked people who kept their distance and never called him "Henry."

He had written two fine books, *A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers* and *Walden*. Both were failures in a contemporary sense. Writing was his work and he wanted rewards for it, all across the board; and it dehumanizes a writer to say that he does not, or is "above this." He was keeping on with his journals, doggedly, joylessly. He plowed, sowed and reaped the Concord soil, season after season, casting up, year after year, the same rocks, sods and miniature life, while its fecundity, and his, drained away under the pitiless sun of reality.

The few patches of light and heat in these later journals are reflected from his awareness that the abolitionist revolution was drawing to its breaking point. It only needed some form of human embodiment; some indestructible man performing irrevocable deeds to make it wholly visible. In these years, or more precisely, in this year of 1857, Thoreau stood, as all revolutionaries do, in that awful limbo between moral suasion and the expressed will of the majority, waiting for someone to be "all transcendental" and supersede the common morality then prevailing: to commit some irrevocable revolutionary act. In short, to embody revolutionary morality.

Shortly after he had received Cholmondeley's letter, a man he could hold up to the light like an oak leaf and study the transparency and wholeness of his form and function, stepped off the Boston train. It was John Brown, who in Kansas, at Pottawatomie, Black Jack and Osawatomie, had created at last for abolitionism, a revolutionary presence. He had come East during a lull in the Kansas wars to raise money, guns and men. Brown carried a heavy carpetbag in his hand and in it was a long length of trace chain with the blood of his son rusting on it. John, his oldest son, had been dragged on bleeding feet for miles over a flinty, dried-up river bed in Kansas, by a United States dragoon mounted on a horse ahead of him. His crime was that of accepting an elective office in the provisional and illegal Free State government of Kansas. Brown would throw this chain at the feet of a possible recruit, saying in his metallic voice, ringing with the demoniac clang of the single-minded prophet, "This treatment made my son a maniac, yes, a maniac."

This tall, gaunt, ceremonious man, with the curious mixture of Quaker and warrior in his dress, whose talk had the stately movement of Jeremy Taylor's prose, whose walk, like Mohammed's, was the hard, pounding stride of a man climbing an invisible hill, made his way to the office of the Kansas Aid Society on School Street. In charge there was Frank Sanborn, a young schoolteacher who lived in Concord, directly across from the Thoreaus' boarding house. "Thoreau," wrote Sanborn in his autobiography, "who had his own bone to pick with the civil government . . . was desirous of meeting Brown." Sanborn took the Captain to dine at the Thoreaus' table. After dinner, Sanborn left Thoreau and Brown discussing Kansas around the parlor fire.

"the obscene temple of slavery."

SO THESE TWO UNIQUE MEN, natural revolutionaries, faced one another that long winter afternoon while the red ashes slowly fell from the glowing logs. Both were surveyors trained in precise measurement and Thoreau was happy to see that "he did not overstate anything, but spoke within bounds." The story of the encounter from the listener's point of view is well recorded in the Journal and "A Plea for Captain John Brown." Apparently most of the virtues Thoreau had been so desperately looking for in a friend, a cause, a society, rested in John Brown. We know the old Puritan would sooner say goddamn than address Thoreau as "Henry." We know of the depth and earnestness of the Captain's talk, mainly describing action that he had initiated and carried through. Thoreau must have looked in awe at the deep blue eyes, as cold as wintry mountain peaks shrouded in blue dusk, and yet with volcanoes burning underneath. He must have thought of what those eyes had looked upon, that bloody night at Pottawatomie, when the old man ordered the death of five men, put the tender flesh of five unresisting men to the edge of the sword. It was impossible not to think of Pottawatomie in Brown's presence. He never talked like a bloody-minded man but he told Thoreau, very markedly, "It is perfectly well understood that I would not be taken."

Yet there was no real communication between these men and it is curious, perhaps tragic, that there was not. Captain Brown was not as transparent as he seemed, to Emerson at least, who called him "the most transparent of men." Brown was capable of great revolutionary duplicity. He had come to Boston ostensibly to get supplies for the Free State cause in Kansas; actually it was to get control of 200 Sharps' rifles (owned by the Massachusetts Kansas Committee and stored in Tabor, Iowa) to make a direct assault on what Thoreau called, "the obscene temple of slavery." In his private judgment he had as much contempt for the fumbling of liberal Northern politicians in their struggle to make Kansas a free state as Thoreau did. But he covered this, expediently, while acquiring the money, guns and men he needed for the act which had been the purpose of his life.

Thoreau himself felt, and later recorded, this lack of

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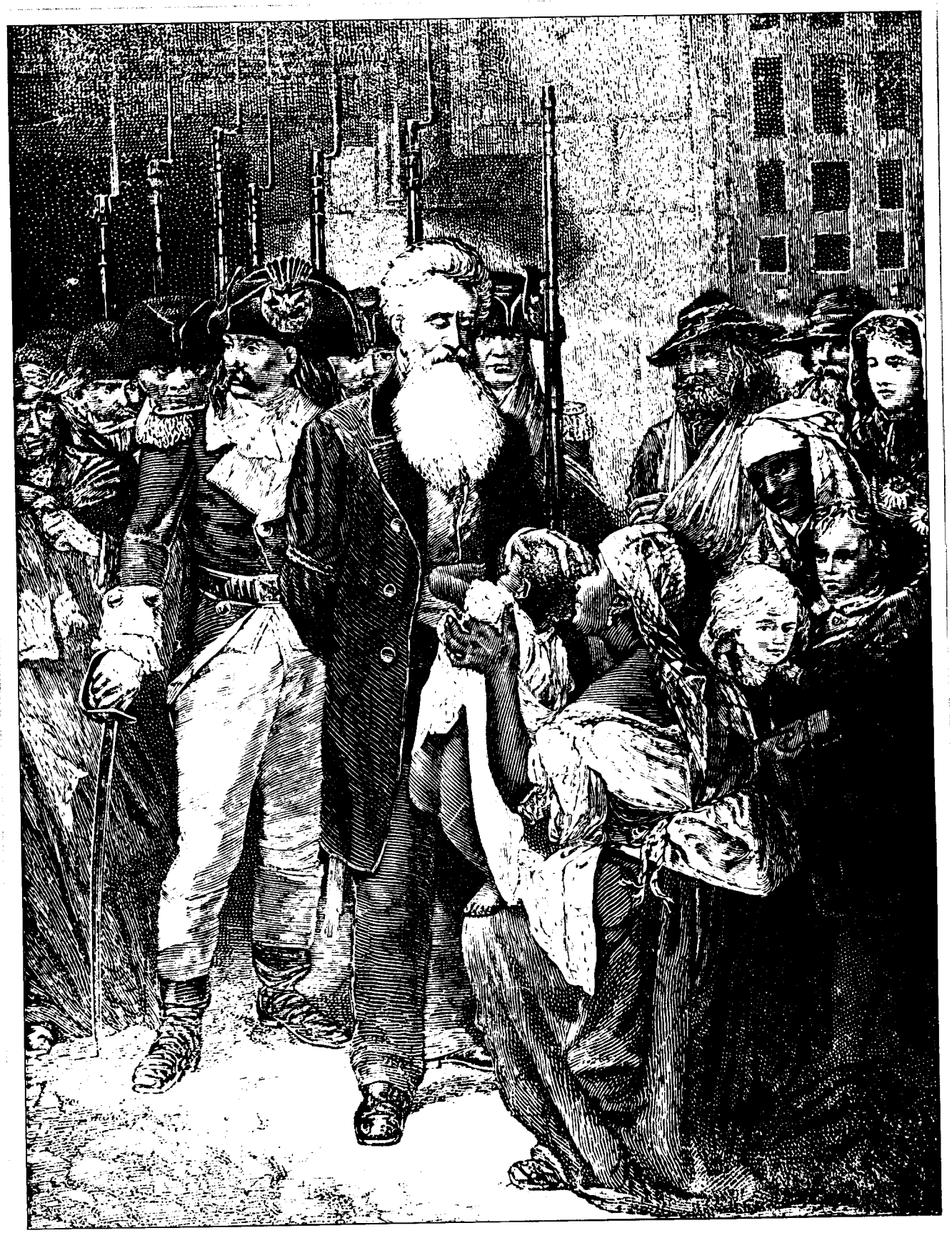

John Brown, on his way to the gallows, stoops and kisses the child.

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communication. He had a very curious juxtaposition in his journal for October 1859: "I subscribed a trifle when he was here three years ago; I had such confidence in the man — that he would do right — but it would seem that he had not confidence enough in me, nor in anybody else I know, to communicate his plans to us . . . I do not wish to kill or be killed, but I can foresee circumstances in which both of these things would by me be unavoidable. In extremities I could even be killed."

Thoreau was wrong in one respect: Brown had confided his ultimate plan to four men that Thoreau knew intimately and two others that he knew casually. The transcendentalists with whom Brown shared his revolutionary commitment had two attitudes that could bind them to a common cause with him. First of all, they believed that the Constitution was anti-slavery in its intent. They felt that the South had usurped power to support its slave system, and that the Jeffersonian doctrine that there were "sacred and sovereign rights reserved in the hands of the people, and judged by the Constitution (of England) unsafe to be delegated to any other judicature," gave them the right of a people's revolution against chattel slavery.

In the second place, they had divested themselves of that sterile individualism which still had Thoreau in its coils. They had joined the society that Thoreau's inner consciousness was demanding; a revolutionary society, built up out of the experience process by which an individual, acting under ethical compulsion, withdraws from the mass society around him, and after an existential pause, becomes fused in a common cause to transform the rejected society. This fusion, to a real revolutionary, is irrevocable and to the death. The morality of the prevailing society becomes obsolete, and a new revolutionary morality takes over. This is a step some transcendentalists found very easy to take. It is highly compatible with the Emersonian dictum, that man himself is the lawgiver.

". . . *alienation from the established order* . . ."

NO ONE CAN DENY that John Brown was aware of these fine distinctions and preconditions, after reading the letter with which he recruited Frank Sanborn to his side. "My dear Friend, Mr. Morton has taken the liberty of saying to me that you felt half inclined to make a common cause with me. I greatly rejoice in this: for I believe when you come to look at the ample field I labor in, and the rich harvest which not only this entire country but the whole world during the present and future may reap from its successful cultivation, you will feel that you are entirely out of your element until you find that you are in it, an entire unit . . . God has honored but comparatively a very small part of mankind with any possible chance for such mighty and soul-satisfying rewards . . . I expect nothing but to 'endure hardness'; but I expect to effect a mighty conquest, even though it be like the last victory of Samson. I felt, for a number of years in earlier life, a steady, strong desire to die; but since I saw any prospect of becoming a 'reaper' in the great harvest, I have not only felt quite willing to live, but have enjoyed life much; and am now rather anxious to live for a few years more."

With a similar appeal, the very essence of revolutionary renewal, Brown recruited Thomas Wentworth Higginson, Edwin Morton, and Theodore Parker. None of them ever mentioned it to Thoreau, although Sanborn later became Thoreau's biographer, saw him almost daily for years, and although carped at by many academics for his lapses in scholarly disciplines, *knew* the *man*, rather than his literary corpus, much better than his critics admit.

Edwin Morton had been at Brook Farm as a lad. Like the others, he was a practicing transcendentalist. He had the greatest admiration for Thoreau and his writings, and was as familiar with them as anyone in the country. While at Harvard he had written a review of *Walden* and the *Week* so laudatory that Thoreau made a special trip to his dormitory to present him with a copy of the *Week*. In one of Cholmondeley's last letters he sends regards to Morton through Thoreau, feeling that Morton was truly of Thoreau's intimate circle.

Thomas Wentworth Higginson, one of the most voluminous writers and chroniclers of this period, salted almost every one of his works with references to his intimacy with Thoreau. He had married Mary Channing, sister of Thoreau's often constant companion, Ellery Channing. He also knew Harrison Blake, Thoreau's Worcester friend. Thoreau was a little too hardpan for Higginson, who was the dandy of the movement; he liked to live off the top and be around where the action was. However, he did respect Thoreau's political judgment and in his *Cheerful Yesterdays* he wrote, "During this time . . . my alienation from the established order was almost as great as that of Thoreau's." As for Theodore Parker — the great prophet of transcendentalism and a man completely organized for *use*, he was not intimate with Thoreau, and if he had thought Thoreau would be at all usable, he would have recruited him forthwith.

Why then, was it they, and not Thoreau, that the great Captain of Liberty picked for his little army? Why was Thoreau, in effect, blackballed from a society which might have redeemed him from long years of melancholy and despair . . . years of which he recorded, "My life is like a stream that is suddenly dammed and has no outlet: but it rises higher up the hills that shut it in, and will become a deep and silent lake." It was a *society* Thoreau

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needed; not individual friends. There are few pages in literature more agonizing to read than those in which Thoreau records his broken friendships:

And now another friendship is ended.
I do not know what has made my friend doubt me,
But I know in love there is no mistake,
and that every estrangement is well-founded . . .

I know of no æons, or periods, no life or death
but these meetings and separations . . .

I have not yet known friendship to cease, I think.
I feel I have experienced its decaying.
Morning, noon and night
I suffer a physical pain, an aching of the breast
Which unfits me for my task . . .

A man cannot be said to succeed in this life
Who does not satisfy one friend . . .

What if we feel a yearning to which no breast answers?
I walk alone.
My heart is full. Feelings impede the current of my thoughts.
I knock on the earth for my friend.
I expect to meet him at every turn, but no friend appears,
and perhaps none is dreaming of me.
I am tired of frivolous society in which silence
Is forever the most natural and the best manners.
I would fain walk on the deep waters,
but my companions will only walk on shallows and puddles.

This is the dark, sick side of Thoreau's individualism, or isolation, or alienation. It explodes distantly, like some deep fissure in the earth's bedrock, disuniting and leaving forever flawed the wholeness of the terrain above. There were no heaps of brilliant fragments in the last journals to be fused into mosaics as clear and brilliant and indestructible as meteorites for another *Week* or *Walden*. But then came the great drama at Harper's Ferry, and two fine fragments left by the visits of John Brown to his fireside became fabricated in the fiery furnace of the day and hour and gave Thoreau a wonderful wholeness again.

He had no time to string together, with a jeweler's touch, a glittering continuity of sentences seen glowing in the density of his minutialike crystals in a cave. This was no *Walden*, conceived with such broad margins it could take eight years to shape it right. He had to forge this between the hammer and the anvil of desperate hours of chaos and confusion, in which everything he had thought and known about John Brown was contradicted and denied in the public press and in the opinions it brought forth — desperate hours, even minutes, where a good man's life and immortality were being pounded into a flat oblivion. "I think we should express ourselves at once, while Brown is alive. The sooner the better."

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT element of his transference of his thoughts and words from private to public utterance came in the way he altered the impersonal character of the journal entries. Where there he had written *I understand that . . .*, he now said, *I heard him say that*. Or where it read in the journal, *I have been told he made such a remark as this*, from the platform he puts it bluntly: *He said*! He was my friend, Thoreau was saying, proudly, and he may have told me more, trusted me with more, than the government can ever prove.

In spite of this bold, and politically dangerous, identification and commitment, his reputation as a "loner," so individualistic he could never *act* in a common cause with anyone, dogged him to the end and kept him out of another society, formed to rescue John Brown from the clutches of the slaveholder. Amos Bronson Alcott, Thoreau's friend and neighbor, was proposing to a few companions that "There should be enough of courage and intrepidity — in Massachusetts men — to steal South, since they cannot march openly, rescue him from the slaveholders, the State and United States courts, and save him for the impending crisis. Captain Higginson would be good for the leadership, and No. 64 will be ready to march with the rest." No. 64 was Alcott himself. Thoreau was never asked and Alcott's journal, from which the prior quotes were taken, says indirectly why, a few days later. "It is well that they met [Brown and Thoreau] and Thoreau saw what he sets forth as no one else can . . . Brown taking more to the human side and driving straight at institutions, while Thoreau contents himself with railing at and leaving them otherwise alone."

Alcott should have known from Thoreau's speech that he was changing: that he was counting numbers at last, first empathizing with the group: "When I think of him and his six sons, and his son-in-law, not to enumerate the others, enlisted for this fight, proceeding cooly, reverently, humanely to work, for months if not years, sleeping and waking upon it, summering and wintering the thought, without expecting any reward but a good conscience, while almost all America stood ranked on the other side, I say again it affects me as a sublime spectacle . . . These men, in teaching us how to die, have at the same time taught us how to live . . . ."

And then, reaching hopefully for the masses, the millions: "The newspapers seem to ignore, or perhaps are ignorant of the fact, that there are at least as many as two or three individuals to a town throughout the North who

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think as much as the present speaker does about him and his enterprise. I do not hesitate to say that they are an important and growing party. We aspire to be something more than stupid and timid chattels, pretending to read history and our Bibles, but desecrating every house and every day we breathe in. Perhaps anxious politicians may prove that only seventeen white men and five Negroes were concerned in the late enterprise; but their very anxiety to prove this might suggest to themselves that all is not told. Why do they still dodge the truth? They are so anxious because of a dim consciousness of the fact, which they do not distinctly face, that at least a million of the free inhabitants of the United States would have rejoiced if it had succeeded."

Powder-blackened hours, amidst bloody agonies.

INDIVIDUALISM IS STILL there, too, but it is no longer permeated with solipsism. It is the revolutionary individualism of man *coming out* from evil. "Any man knows when he is justified, and all the wits in the world cannot enlighten him on that point. The murderer always knows that he is justly punished; but when a government takes the life of a man without the consent of his conscience, it is an audacious government, and is taking a step toward its own dissolution. Is it not possible that an individual may be right and a government wrong? Are laws to be enforced simply because they were made, or declared by any number of men to be good, if they are *not* good? Is there any necessity for a man's being a tool to perform a deed of which his better nature disapproves? Is it the intention of lawmakers that *good* men shall be hung ever? . . . What right have *you* to enter into a compact with yourself that you *will* do thus and so, against the light within you? Is it for *you* to *make up* your mind — to form any resolution whatever — and not accept the convictions that are forced on you, and which ever pass your understanding? . . . I plead not for his life but for his character — his immortal life, so it becomes your cause wholly and not his in the least."

The shy, woodsy little man who in 1855 told someone that he "suspected any enterprise in which two were engaged together," took on the sole sponsorship and, for a time, the total public defense of 12 traitors caught red-handed. The men Brown had chosen to help him, with the exception of Higginson, had vanished. Gerrit Smith went into an insane asylum. Sanborn and Doctor Howe went to Canada. Parker was already dying in Italy. Edwin Morton went so fast and so far that he was scoffingly referred to as "the wicked flea whom no man pursueth."

And so Thoreau, the stone the builder rejected, became the foundation for all who have faith in him — and who believe today that he is still the greatest prophet in this accursed racist country where the black man still has no rights that the white man has to respect. The great abolitionists, other than Brown, have been downgraded for so many years now that they are practically exorcised from the American consciousness. Only Henry Thoreau has remained indestructible, escaped planned oblivion, and that only because of his consummate art. And all who pick up or are taught *Walden* and the *Week*, and are drawn by their magic into the totality of their author's work, come at last to his great plea for a still despised and defamed man who for 56 powder-blackened hours, amidst the bloody agonies of his dying comrades and his dying sons, was the conscience of the world.

In his lens-clear view of John Brown, Thoreau came finally to realize that there is an exalted form of individualism which merges into universality and becomes one with it. He expressed this best at the service held for Brown on the day of his hanging. "So universal and widely related is any transcendent moral greatness, and so nearly identical with greatness everywhere and in every age — as a pyramid contracts the nearer you approach its apex — that when I now look over my commonplace book of poetry, I find the best of it is oftenest applicable, in part, or wholly, to the case of Captain Brown." The key word here is pyramid, for greatness in any individual can only come when he rises as a symbolic peak out of the broad shoulders of men and women, like-minded with himself, whose common, multiple aspirations he embodies in his own selfless, revolutionary presence.

Henry Thoreau shouldered and put up with for the rest of his life the full burden of his responsibility and affinity to John Brown's revolutionary morality; to the tragic waste, the straits, the conspiracy, the killing, the tenderness, love and sacrifice, the whole diapason of upheaval that lesser men find so abhorrent. He did not safely and sentimentally enthuse over the overthrow or the attempted overthrow of tyrannies distant in time or place while knuckling under the petty tyranny, the censure and threat coming from the wooden-headed reactionaries all about him, from questioning inquisitors and the policeman's violence that backs them up. Revolutions are bloody awful, no one argues that, but things have to be twice that bloody awful to make them work. This was the way things were with John Brown and Henry Thoreau. Both were real men in a real world. You have to take them as that or leave them alone.

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One Man with a dream, at Pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.
—Arthur O'Shaughnessy

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

by Ralph J. Gleason

THE FIRST TIME I SAW Bob Dylan, a frail, insolent-looking, scraggy youth standing on a stage singing folk songs, I thought he was a drag. Worse than that, pretentious and only a faint echo of Woody Guthrie.

But listening to that same voice has changed my life, fundamentally.

When I first was exposed to his singing, I didn't hear him, really. I only thought I did. Then, almost by accident, I was swept up in "The Times They Are A-Changin' " and "A Hard Rain's Gonna Fall" and some of his epic work. Then he came to Berkeley, California, and I heard him. Really heard him. And "hear" is the key word. When I met him I apologized for not digging him at first. "Y'didn't hear me, that's all," he said softly and shook hands.

Bob Dylan's songs and lyrics changed my life because

Illustrations by Gene Holtan

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they provided a new, nonideological basis for an attack upon the evils of our society that is linked with the attacks made by other artists but which is, because of his song and because of his youth, particularly effective. "I write in chains of flashing images," Dylan says, and these flashing images seem to me to provide a more serious assault on the structure of the Great Society and upon its hypocrisies and pretentions than any ideology or armed might of a foreign power.

Dylan is a major voice in the entertainment world and it is no accident that his moral position is expressed from that pulpit. The churches have abrogated their responsibility to youth (and are madly trying to get back in the act with jazz priests and beatnik clergy and anything else they can think of, but a square is a square).

Youth has found its own way, a veritable children's crusade led by a slender 24-year-old songwriter, singer and electric guitar player whose song royalties for the first half of 1965 were greater than the combined royalties for that same period of the celebrated Tin Pan Alley heroes, Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Oscar Hammerstein. Bob Dylan songs, recorded by hundreds of artists, are flooding the record stores. His songs blare forth from every radio and every juke box, and his voice is loud in the land, even when he is not singing.

And that voice is unique for what it is saying. Dylan is telling the American audience (and through that audience telling the world) that it is better to make love than to make war, that the only loyalty is to oneself ("that it is not he or she or them or it that you belong to"), that politics are irrelevant ("you say 'nothin's perfect' an i tell you again there are no politics"), that the leadership cult of the Great Society is a fraud ("don't follow leaders, watch the parkin meters"), that the old-fashioned virtues of hard work and thrift and a clean tongue are obsolete ("money doesn't talk it swears; obscenity who really cares?").

He is saying, in short, that the entire system of Western society, built upon Aristotelian logic, the Judeo-Christian ethic and upon a series of economic systems from Hobbes to Marx to Keynes, does not work.

What he is saying is getting an unbelievably intense reaction from a generation thirsting for answers other than those in the college text books. Students may very well learn more from Dylan today than from the obsolete educational system, structured by another epoch. "I know I am a better human being for reading Bob Dylan," a high school student wrote me, adding: "I would rather write poetry now than study science." In schools all over the country, students are copying down lyrics of Dylan songs from records and insisting that the English class study them. A Jesuit high school in Sacramento devoted most of an English class one semester last year to the study of Dylan as poetry, and the University of California, like numerous other colleges and universities, has seen students get together themselves to hold unofficial seminars on his poems.

DYLAN'S ASSAULT on Western society has incurred the wrath of critics, poets and spokesmen for the Cultural Establishment. Louis Simpson, himself a prize-winning poet, has said, "I don't think Bob Dylan is a poet at all; he is an entertainer . . . I am not surprised, though, that American college students consider him their favorite poet; they don't know anything about poetry." Simpson notwithstanding, Dylan has already made the kind of searing impression upon this generation that any poet in history would have been proud to make. *His* words, not those of Pulitzer Prize winners, are quoted by students, written on walls, pasted in notebooks to demonstrate the fervor of their belief. Other poets, like Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Allen Ginsberg, who have been speaking to the young for years, quite obviously consider Dylan a poet, for they recognize what Dylan is.

Dylan has done the impossible. He has taken poetry out to the streets and put it on the juke boxes and brought it into the lives of everyone. Surely this is the dream of all poets. Think of having the whole world for an audience, not just a circle of friends — a world audience hanging on your every word. Dylan has done this. He has taken poetry out of the classrooms and out of the hands of the squares. He has discovered how to speak to youth, and youth is never square.

He is the first poet of that all-American artifact, the juke box, the first American poet to touch everyone, to hit all walks of life in this great sprawling society. The first poet of mass media, if you will. "I am a 38-year-old housewife, mother of three teen-agers, and I love the Dylan songs," reads a typical letter. Up front at a Bob Dylan concert in Berkeley last fall were two Hell's Angels, a couple of university professors, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, novelist Ken Kesey and others of the hip intelligentsia.

IS DYLAN A POET? Even his advocates have their reservations. Ginsberg says Dylan is still hung up having to rhyme words and Ferlinghetti wonders if Dylan would be effective as a poet without the guitar. But the only fundamental dissent comes from those who are not moved by him. Not since Elizabethan days has there been such an amalgam of popular speech and poetry. Dylan has taken the speech of the streets, broken the rules of language and made poetry of it.

One of the reasons why he is hauntingly important to

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the young is that he makes one face oneself. You may not "enjoy" a Dylan concert or a Dylan album, but if you hear it, really *hear* it, you have to be affected by it. You cannot ignore it. Like all great art it reaches inside you and its intensity is frightening, too, so that while you are pleasured by it in one sense, you are also fearful for the strength of such a vision. Is Dylan poetry? To me he is. How many lines of the last three Pulitzer poets are quoted by the young? Yet quotes from Dylan ring through everything they do or say today.

As W. H. Auden wrote, "In Memory of W. B. Yeats":

For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper; it flows south

A Don Quixote riding across a neon-lighted jungle.

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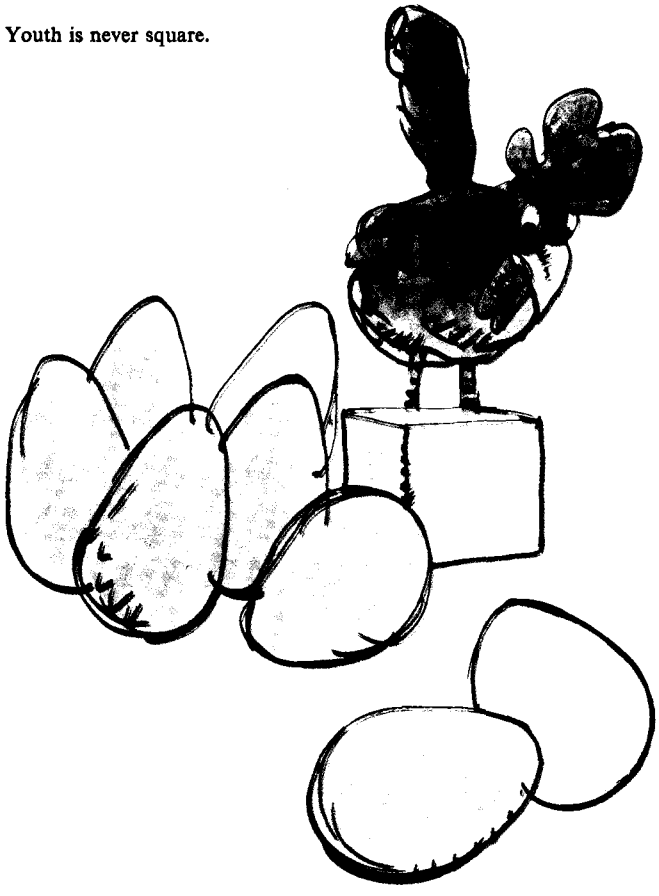
Youth is never square.



From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

Dylan says: "These songs aren't complicated to me at all. It's all very clear and simple to me. I know what I'm . . . what they're all about. There's nothing hard to figure out for me. I wouldn't write anything I can't really see. They're all about real people. I'm sure you've seen all the people in my songs at one time or another." Rimbaud, when his mother asked what he meant by "Season in Hell," said: "I mean what it says; literally and in every sense."

Dylan thinks of songs — all songs, his own included — as pictures, "chains of flashing images." Dylan's world is a nightmare world, for the most part. "If my thought dreams could be seen, they'd probably put my head in a guillotine," he wrote. In his world are all sorts of carnival freak show figures: "Einstein disguised as Robin Hood . . . with his friend, the jealous monk," "the motorcycle black madonna two-wheeled gypsy queen," "Sweet Melinda, the peasants call her the goddess of gloom," "Dr. Filth . . . his nurse, some local loser, she's in charge of the cyanide hole," "Mack the Finger," etc. Recurring figures in Dylan poetry include the monk, the hunchback, the sideshow geek and clown and Napoleon. It's a gaudy, depressing grotesquerie rivaled only by the inmates of "The Circus of Dr. Lao" or the images of Rimbaud's "Season in Hell."

FOR DYLAN SEES THE WORLD around him — and this is, I suspect, the core of his attraction for the young — as a world run by a vast machine and by men who are heartless, mechanized men and part of that machine. He sings of alienation, of the emptiness of the adult society; he is the clown, the Napoleon in rags, a Don Quixote riding across a neon-lighted jungle, across the moon country, past lines of empty drive-in movies showing vista-vision pictures of what's happening. The vision is apocalyptical, surrealistic, the images glowing, and he is articulating the realignment of priorities first heralded by the wordless revolt of the jazzmen's horns.

There's something in Dylan for everybody. "You who philosophize disgrace," he screams at the lawmakers in "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll" (a song about the fatal beating given a Negro servant by a Maryland farmer). He sneers at the groves of academe ("the old folks home in the college"), at religion ("the phantom of the opera in the perfect image of a priest"), at Madison Avenue ("grey flannel dwarfs"), at the war machine in "With God on Our Side," at hard work ("I ain't gonna work on Maggie's farm no more . . . they say sing while you slave, an I just get bored").

The new generation is a lonely one. "It's always silent where I am," Dylan has said, and again: "There is no love except in silence and silence doesn't say a word." It is a generation born in the shadow of the Bomb and straining to make sense out of a life governed, stratified by and resting upon assumptions of another age.

In "Desolation Row," Dylan runs through a congeries

Desolation Row: congeries of bizarre images.

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of bizarre images, including the Titanic sailing with T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound "fighting in the captain's tower while calypso singers laugh at them and fishermen hold flowers." Later in the song he comments: "All those people that you mention, yes I know them, they're quite lame. I had to rearrange their faces and give them all another name."

DYLAN'S OPEN USE of personal references in his songs has given rise to a whole mythology of in-group stories and interpretations rivaling those of Shakespeare's sonnets. His love songs include, "It's All Over Now Baby Blue," "Don't Think Twice," "It Ain't Me Babe," "If You Gotta Go, Go Now," and "All I Really Wanna Do Is, Baby, Be Friends With You." They begin in a slightly acid-touched romantic mood, bittersweet and hipster-cool, then go on into the openly accusatory "Queen Jane Approximately," "Like a Rolling Stone," and "Positively 4th Street." Some of the songs are firmly believed by many to parallel his romance with Joan Baez, the queen of the world of folk song. But then again, one wonders, how many other episodes and how many other individuals might fit? Certainly the sentiments so eloquently expressed — the truth of beauty, the necessity of freedom, the belief in the sanctity of self — fit far more than an individual romance. They speak directly to the love-hopes of the young and they speak in a language the young understand.

Dylan has said it in his own way:

"What folk music is, it's not depression songs and these kind of things . . . its foundations aren't *work*, its foundations aren't 'slave away' and all this. Its foundations are — except for Negro songs which are based on that and just kinda overlapped — the main body of it (folk music) is just based on myth and the Bible and plague and famine and all kinds of things like that which are just nuthin but mystery and you can see it in all the songs — roses growin right up out of people's hearts and naked cats in bed with, y'know, spears growing right out of their backs and y'know seven years of this and eight years of that and it's all really something that nobody can really touch. . . ."

TEENAGERS RECOGNIZE in Dylan one of their own, a spokesman for their rejection of the adult world. "Look out kid, it's something you did god knows what but you're doin it again." That line is from Dylan's "Subterranean Homesick Blues," a song that was on every juke box in the country. No one under parental authority (or any authority *in loco parentis*) needs to intellectualize the empathy he feels for that line. Or for: "Them that must bow down to authority that they do not respect in any degree, who despise their jobs, their destiny, speak jealously of them that are free, cultivate what they get to be nothing more than something they invest in."

Sanctity of self.

Dylan describes a world in which naturalness is forbidden, creativity is the enemy and beauty is assassinated. Youth, struggling to keep from growing up absurd in a land of TV commercials and high-rise rapacity, sees this same world and sees, too, that we adult numbers accept it.

"At midnight all the agents and the superhuman crew come out and round up everyone that knows more than they do; then they bring them to the factory where the heart-attack machine is strapped across their shoulders, and then the kerosene is brought down from the castles by insurance men who go check to see that nobody is escaping to Desolation Row." Youth knows intuitively that this is a true State-of-the-Union message.

But Dylan's world is not all Desolation Row. Listen to these lines from "Mr. Tambourine Man":

"Take me disappearing through the smoke rings of my mind, down the foggy ruins of time, far past the frozen leaves, the haunted, sheltered trees, out to the windy beach, far from the twisted reach of crazy sorrow."

Or these lines from an album cover:

for i am runnin in a fair race
with no racetrack but the nite
an no competition but the dawn.

or

for my road is blessed
with many flowers
an the sounds of flowers

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or
for all people laugh
in the same tongue
and cry
in the same tongue
or
it's just one big world of songs
an they're all on loan
if they're only turned loose t sing
or
lonely? ah yes
but it is the flowers an the mirrors
of flowers that now meet my
loneliness
an mine shall be a strong loneliness
dissolvin deep
t the depths of my freedom
an that, then, shall
remain my song.

"I TRY TO HARMONIZE with words the lonesome sparrow sings," he wrote at one point; and later, "My songs're written with the kettledrum in mind / a touch of any anxious color. unmentionable. obvious. an people perhaps like a soft brazilian singer. . . i have given up at making any attempt at perfection."

"My poems are written in a rhythm of unpoetic distortion / divided by pierced ears. false eyelashes / subtracted by people constantly torturing each other. with a melodic purring line of descriptive hollowness — seen at times thru dark sunglasses and other forms of psychic explosion, a song is anything that can walk by itself / i am called a songwriter. a poem is a naked person . . . some people say i am a poet."

"The songs are insanely honest," Dylan wrote a friend, "not meanin t twist any heads an written only for the reason that i myself me alone wanted and needed t write them. i 've conceded the fact there is no understanding of anything. at best, just winks of the eye an that is all i'm lookin for now i guess."

Dylan provoked a storm at the Newport Folk Music Festival of 1964 when he abandoned his protest songs in favor of love songs — and bitter, slightly warped though they may be, they are songs about love. The editor of Sing! Out!, the national folk song magazine, wrote a long, impassioned open letter deploring the change. Fans rose to Dylan's defense. Country and Western singer Johnny Cash summed it up with the statement, "Shut up and let him sing." Then in the summer of 1965, again at the Newport Folk Festival, Dylan went onstage with a rock 'n roll band using the hated electric amplified guitar, bass and piano. The audience booed.

Dylan was a bit surprised.

"You can't tell where the booing's going to come up. Can't tell at all," he said. "It comes up in the weirdest, strangest places and they do it in blocks and when it comes it's quite a thing in itself. I mean they must be pretty rich to be able to go some place and boo. I couldn't afford it if I was in their shoes."

The booing — which apparently has tapered off now — indicates a very real concern with what Dylan stands for. They *demand* things from him. But fans are beginning to realize that he is a poet and as such cannot be "owned."

BUT WITH THE VERY SAME cynicism and skepticism that Dylan speaks to, some of his teen-age audience is asking today, "Has Dylan sold out?" He certainly has made a very great deal of money; he is perhaps a millionaire. The New York Times quotes Columbia Records as saying that. His records have

"Has Dylan sold out?"

been on the top of the best-selling charts. His concerts fill halls everywhere. And money, in our society, marks the "sell-out."

But Allen Ginsberg, replying to a questioner about Dylan's having sold out, put his answer bluntly: "Dylan has sold out to God. That is to say, his command was to spread his beauty as wide as possible. It was an artistic challenge to see if great art can be done on a juke box. And he proved it can."

"I have more money," Dylan said recently. "I just have a lot more money, is all." And he doesn't care about the taxes. "I have no remorse. I don't care. Uncle Sam, he's my UNCLE, he's a member of the family! Can't turn your back on a member of the family!

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"I don't know how much I make. I have no idea and I don't want to ever find out. You see a lot of people start out and they plan to try to be stars. Like they have to be stars. I mean I know a lot of those people. And they start out and they go into show business for many, many reasons. To be seen, y'know. I started out and this had nothing to do with it. It just happened. I haven't really struggled for that. It happened, you know? It happened like anything else happens. Just a happening. You don't try to figure out happenings. You dig happenings. I really have no idea. That is the truth. I always tell the truth. That is the truth."

But popularity has had a deep effect on his life just as it has had on any of the star figures in our culture. "I can't write in the cafeteria, everybody wants the napkin," he complained, half kidding, to a friend. And then he arranged to meet the same friend at an all-night restaurant and sat in the window until the autograph seekers drove him out.

But whether Dylan admits any change, his program is different now. The rock 'n roll band shows that; and he has abandoned some of the older songs. "I wish I could write like 'Girl from the North Country' (an older song) but I can't write like that anymore. I dunno why."

He doesn't think of his older songs as being any less valid, though. "I just consider them something else to themselves, at another time, another dimension. It would be kind of dishonest for me to sing them now because I wouldn't really feel like singing them.

"The difference in the songs I write now, in the last year and a half, maybe two . . . the songs before the fourth record, I used to know what I wanted to say before I used to write the song. See? All the stuff which I had written before, which wasn't song, was just on a piece of toilet paper. When it comes out like that, that's the kind of stuff I never would sing because people just would not be ready for it. I just went through that other thing of writing songs until I couldn't write like it anymore. It was just too easy and it wasn't really right. I would start out, I would know what I wanted to say before I wrote the songs and I would say it and it would never come out exactly the way I thought it would. But it touched it.

"But now I just write a song like I *know* that it's just going to be all right and I don't really know exactly what it's all about, but I do know the minute and the layers of what it's all about.

" 'Rolling Stone' 's the best song I wrote. I wrote 'Rolling Stone' after England. I boiled it down, but it's all there. I had to quit after England. I had to stop and when I was writing it I knew I had to sing it with a band. I always sing when I write, even prose, and I heard it like that."

When he was told of high school students studying his lyrics, Dylan asked quickly if the lyrics were the old songs or the new ones. "If it's the old ones, I feel a little guilty about it. They should use the new ones, like 'Desolation Row.' I know I'm not accepted by the professors in the universities and it used to bother me, but I know now I have nothin to live up to" (an unconscious or conscious quote of one of his own lines in "It's All Right Ma").

THE CONTRAST BETWEEN Dylan the person and Dylan the prophet of the Doomsday Poems is startling. Thin, almost emaciated, his lips clutching a cigarette, he talks quickly and nervously in a distinctive, edgy softness using a language of the urban hip street folk. His hands are cold and he seems shy and quick, like a young deer.

On stage, he is almost precisely the same as off. He dresses the same, though he may change boots or sometimes put on his suit of huge black and olive checks. "I come on stage the same way I go anywhere. I mean are all these people paying to see me look neat?"

"even the President of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked."

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"I want to sing you a song, recognizing that there are goliaths nowadays," he said as he prepared to sing "The Lonesome Death of Hattie Carroll," that grim description of the wanton murder of a Negro maid. "This is a true story, only the words have been changed," he said once, introducing "The Ballad of Davey Moore," which condemns the brutality of boxing. His wry sense of humor creeps up continually; sometimes he seems even to be putting himself on. "It's Halloween," he said at Carnegie Hall, "an I've got my Bob Dylan mask on."

There's a line in one of Dylan's songs, "Like a Rolling Stone," which is very revealing. He sings, "You're invisible now, you've got no secrets to conceal." And another time he said to a questioner, "Don't these people know I expose myself every time I go on stage?" In his poem, "Last Thoughts on Woody Guthrie," are the lines, "Just where am I goin? . . . just what am I doin on this road I'm walkin? on this trail I'm turnin? . . . am I mixed up too much? . . . why am I walkin . . . why am I runnin? . . . what am I sayin? What am I knowin? . . . who am I helpin? . . . what am I breakin? What am I giving? What am I takin?"

"The songs are what I do," he says. "What I do is write the songs and sing them. And perform them. That's what I do. The performing part of it could end, but like I'm going to be writing these songs and singing them and I see no end, right now. That's what I do. Anything else interferes with it. Most of the time we feel like playing. That's important to me. The aftermath, whatever happens before and after is really not important to me. Just the time on the stage and the time we're singing the songs and performing them. Or really *not* performing them even, just letting them be there."

Dylan's Doomsday Poems thunder against injustice and sing out in defense of "the confused, accused, misused, strung out ones and worse an . . . every hung up person in the whole wide universe." They include "Chimes of Freedom" as well as "It's All Right Ma," that bitter attack on the American Dream: "make everything from toy guns that spark to flesh-colored Christs that glow in the dark. It's easy to see without looking too far that not much is really sacred" and "even the President of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked."

"You have to vomit up everything you know. I did that, I vomited it all up and then went out and saw it all again," Dylan told a poet. The parallel to Rimbaud is striking, quite apart from the kinship of "Desolation Row" to "Season in Hell." Rimbaud not only was a child prodigy of poetry, but, like Dylan, ran away from home again and again. "The poet makes himself a seer," Rimbaud wrote, "by a long, prodigious and rational disordering of the senses. Every form of love, of suffering, of madness; he searches himself, he consumes all the poisons in him, and keeps only their quintessences. This is an unspeakable torture during which he needs all his faith and superhuman strength and during which he becomes the great patient, the great criminal, the great accursed — and the great learned one! — among men. For he arrives at the *unknown*! Because he has cultivated his own soul — which was rich to begin with — more than any other man! He reaches the unknown and even if, crazed, he ends up by losing the understanding of his visions, at least he has seen them! Let him die charging through those unutterable, unnameable things: other horrible workers will come; they will begin from the horizons where he has succumbed!" Then Rimbaud adds, "the poet really is the thief of fire" and "eternal art will have its function, since poets are citizens. Poetry will no longer rhyme with action; it will be ahead of it!"

Dylan puts it slightly differently. "I am raginly against absolutely everything that wants t force nature t be unnatural," he says.

The New Youth is taking Dylan seriously. At a recent press conference, he noted "something that amazed me. This 15-year-old girl, and she knew poets like William Blake and she knew his work and she was hip to all kinds of different things which people usually are not acquainted with at that age. So maybe it's just a new kind of person. A new kind of 15-year-old person. I don't know. I do know that that person is more free in the mind than 22-year-old college kids."

THE STRENGTH IS THERE in the words and the songs. The ideas cleave to the minds of the young like moss to a tree trunk. And while he rejects the values of our world, of the Great Society and the New Frontier, he also speaks eloquently of a world in which the sacredness of the individual is paramount. It may not turn out that way, but the New Youth's "thief of fire" limns it out for you and, if poetry is ahead of action, it will come. This is how he says it:

i can't believe that i have
t hate anybody
an when i do
it will only be out of fear
an i'll know it

i know no answers an no truth
for absolutely no soul alive
i will listen to no one
who tells me morals
there are no morals
an i dream alot.

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Frantz

Illustrations by Milton Glaser

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[*An Introduction to* Frantz Fanon]

FRANTZ FANON WAS A PSYCHIATRIST who, during the bitter, horrid war between the French and the Algerians, serving on the staff of a hospital in Algeria, found his true role as a revolutionist and spokesman for the Algerians. *The Wretched of the Earth* contains not only the dramatic case histories of Fanon's experience in the Algerian hospital, but considerable articulation of his philosophy.

The book has already become one of the standard, basic texts of the international Negro revolution, the case histories a burning indictment of the inhumanity of the French colonizers and a frightening prophecy of how the inevitable result of colonization is to rot the moral fabric of the colonizer.

The Wretched of the Earth is an essential map in these twisted times, a new perspective from which to look at our relationship to Cuba, Latin America, Panama, and, above all, to Vietnam and to the black people of America.

But what has this textbook of the sickness of colonization, no matter how brilliant, got to do with the United States? Surely every graduate of even our elementary schools knows that the United States has no colonies, is now and has been an anticolonial power.

And this is just where *The Wretched of the Earth* becomes most valuable.

The United States redefined colonialism. It did not go to Africa and exploit the natives and the soil; it brought the natives to the United States and exploited them here; and it drove the native American Indians by murder and treachery into loose concentration camps and appropriated their lands.

Then, by the remarkable economic system that was the outgrowth of the American industrial revolution, it set up its colonies, not as colonies in the old sense, but rather like franchises. Venezuela, Cuba, the Philippines and other countries were to the United States as the Chevron Station is to Standard Oil. They front it but we own it.

Not until recent years has the true reality of this system emerged; it operates as the colonial system did for the colonial powers and it is based on the assumption that the Africans, the Negroes, the Vietnamese, the Latin Americans are basically inferior people, hence subhuman as the Nazis declared the Slavs subhuman, and open to the treatment implicit in this.

"When hopes and dreams are loose in the streets, it is well for the timid to lock doors, shutter windows and lie low until the wrath has passed," Eric Hoffer wrote in *The True Believer*.

In order to understand the strength of the "hopes and dreams" that are loose in the streets, one needs to see the world today as the colonized, the exploited, see it. One needs to see it as a Negro sees it who turns on the TV in his housing project apartment to "see what the white folks are up to."

The Wretched of the Earth may shock and frighten but it is essential to obtaining this view. It does not matter if it is wrong in some detail or even, in some argument, wrong in principle. We have created a world in which the wretched of the earth see us as Fanon tells it; we need desperately to know how they see us because all our history books, our government press-handouts and mass media are dedicated to preventing us from finding out what is going on out there. We're looking at in-flight movies of Never-Never Land while the real world is getting ready to blow up right off the wing tip of the plane.

IF ONE READS THIS BOOK with the intent of learning from it things to use in thinking of the American Negro and the Vietnamese and not just the Africans, it is brilliantly illuminating. Read Fanon's eloquent description of the colonial town:

"The settler's town is a strongly-built town, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly-lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt and the garbage cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about. The settler's feet . . . are protected by strong shoes although the streets of his town are clean and even, with no holes or stones. The settler's town is a well-fed town, an easygoing town; its belly is always full of good things. The settler's town is a town of white people . . . ."

And then, juxtaposed for effect, his description of the town belonging to the natives, the colonized people:

". . . the native town, the negro village, the medina, the reservation, is a place of ill-fame . . . Men live there on top of each other and their huts are built one on top of the other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty arabs. The look that the native turns on the settler's town is a look of lust, a look of envy; it expresses his dreams of possession: to sit at the settler's table, to sleep in the settler's bed, with his wife if possible. The colonised man is an envious man. And this the settler knows well; when their glances meet he ascertains bitterly, always on the defensive, 'They want to take our place.' "

Change a few words, switch one's mental picture and these lines fit Hattiesburg and Jackson and countless other

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towns, and, in the North, Harlem and Watts and the Fillmore district of San Francisco and the Negro ghettos of Chicago and Detroit and other large cities.

WESTERN CULTURE and Western religion, for the wretched, mean the white man's culture and the white man's religion, Fanon declares. "The Church . . . is the white people's church . . . she does not call the native to God's ways but to the ways of the white man, of the master, of the oppressor . . . the violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him."

Violence is essential to Fanon's philosophy. "The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays. For him there is no compromise, no possible coming to terms; colonisation and de-colonisation are simply a question of relative strength. The exploited man sees that his liberation implies the use of all means, and that of force first and foremost. When, in 1956 . . . the *Front de Liberation Nationale* . . . stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat, no Algerian really found these terms too violent."

Thus, Leroi Jones.

Anger as a reaction to these ideas is not useful. Consider the facts. As Fanon reports, "In 1945 the 45,000 dead at Setif could pass unnoticed; in 1947 the 90,000 dead in Madagascar could be the subject of a simple paragraph in the papers; in 1952 the 200,000 victims of the repression in Kenya could meet with relative indifference . . . ." And the Congo massacres — of *whites* — make headlines.

The view of the world which Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* espouses provides a logical explanation for the intransigence of the colored peoples, for the emergence of the Malcolm X's and the Leroi Joneses and for the bitterness with which the Americans are greeted in Santo Domingo and elsewhere. It unravels the mystery (for Americans) of the strength of the Viet Cong, which seems to grow and grow despite the bombings. "The truth is that there is no colonial power today which is capable of adopting the only form of contest which has a chance of succeeding, namely, the prolonged establishment of large forces of occupation," Fanon wrote before Vietnam.

THE ATTITUDE expressed by Eric Hoffer, "When hopes and dreams are loose in the streets it is well for the timid to lock doors, shutter windows and lie low until the wrath has passed," is applicable today but it is a philosophy of defeat. The hopes and dreams are too strong, the force of the wrath too determined. "The question which is looming on the horizon," Fanon wrote in this prophetic book, "is the need for a redistribution of wealth. Humanity must reply to this question or be shaken to pieces by it."

Humanity must also settle the question of colonialism, of the concept that "we" are better than "they," that there are people who somehow are inferior and subhuman and should be treated as such. "Even the President of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked," Bob Dylan wrote. Until the concept prevails that the Vietnamese, naked in his rice paddy, is the equal, as a man, of the President of the United States (and all that this statement implies), we shall go on heaping coals upon the smoldering fires of the wretched of the earth until they explode — as they have in Algeria, in Kenya, in Vietnam, in Watts — and all of Caucasian "civilization" is reduced to ashes in their flames.

—*by* RALPH J. GLEASON

[Fanon's *Colonial War & Mental Disorders*/Case Histories]

CASE NO. 1. *Undifferentiated homicidal impulsions found in a survivor of a mass murder.*

S..., 37 years old, a *fellah*. Comes from a village in the country around Constantine. Never took any part in politics. From the outset of the war, his district was the scene of fierce battles between the Algerian forces and the French army. S... thus had occasion to see dead and wounded. But he continued to keep out of things. From time to time however, in common with the people as a whole, the peasantry of his village used to come to the aid of Algerian fighting men who were passing through. But one day, early in 1958, a deadly ambush was laid not far from the village. After this the enemy forces went into operation and besieged the village, which in fact had no soldiers in it. All the inhabitants were summoned and questioned; nobody replied. A few hours after, a French officer arrived by helicopter and said: "There's been too much talk about this village. Destroy it." The soldiers began to set fire to the houses while the women who were trying to get a few clothes together or save some provisions were driven away by blows with rifle-butts. Some peasants took advantage of the general confusion to run away. The officer gave the order to bring together the men who remained and had them brought out to near a water-course where the killing began. Twenty-nine men where shot at point-blank range. S... was wounded by two bullets . . . . [continued]

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S... fainted and came to to find himself in the midst of a group of A.L.N. [National Army of Liberation in Algeria (trans.)]. He was treated by the Health Service and evacuated as soon as it was possible to move him. While on the way, his behaviour became more and more abnormal, and worried his escort continually. He demanded a gun, although he was helpless and a civilian, and refused to walk in front of anybody, no matter who they were. He refused to have anyone behind him. One night he got hold of a soldier's gun and awkwardly tried to fire on the sleeping soldiers. He was disarmed rather roughly ....

He began by telling us that he wasn't dead yet and that he had played a good trick on the others. Bit by bit, we managed to reconstruct his story of the assassination he had attempted. S... was not anxious, he was rather in fact over-excited, with violent phases of agitation, accompanied by screaming. He did not break anything much, but tired everybody out by his incessant chatter, and the whole Service was permanently on the alert on account of his declared intention of "killing everybody." During his stay in hospital he attacked about eight patients with make-shift weapons. Nurses and doctors were not spared either. We almost wondered whether we were not witnessing one of those masked forms of epilepsy which is characterised by a wholesale aggressivity which is nearly always present.

Deep sleep treatment was then tried. From the third day on, a daily interview made it possible for us to better understand the moving force of the pathological process. The patient's intellectual confusion progressively toned down. Here are some extracts from his statements:

"God is with me ... but he certainly isn't with those who are dead ... I've had hellish good luck ... In life you've got to kill so as not to be killed ... When I think that I knew nothing at all about all that business ... There are Frenchmen in our midst. They disguise themselves as Arabs. They've all got to be killed. Give me a machine-gun. All these so-called Algerians are really Frenchmen ... and they won't leave me alone. As soon as I want to go to sleep they come into my room. But now I know all about them. Everyone wants to kill me. But I'll defend myself. I'll kill them all, every single one of them. I'll cut their throats one after the other, and yours with them. You all want to kill me but you should set about it differently. I'd kill you all as soon as look at you, big ones and little ones, women, children, dogs, birds, donkeys ... everyone will be dead. And afterward I'll be able to sleep in peace ...."

All this was said in jerks; the patient's attitude remained hostile, suspicious and aloof.

After three weeks, his state of excitement had disappeared, but a certain reticence and a tendency to seek solitude gave us grounds for fearing a more serious evolution of his disorder. However, after a month he asked to be let out in order to learn a trade that would be compatible with his disability. He was then entrusted to the care of the Social Service of the F.L.N. We saw him six months after, and he was going on well.

Case No. 2. *Marked anxiety psychosis of the depersonalisation type after the murder of a woman while temporarily insane.*

Dj..., a former student, a soldier in the A.L.N., 19 years old. His illness already dated from some months back by the time he came to the Centre. His appearance was characteristic: he seemed very depressed, his hands were constantly moist and his lips were dry; his chest was lifted by continual sighs. Pernicious insomnia; two attempts at suicide since the trouble started. During the conversation, he struck hallucinatory attitudes while listening. Sometimes his glance fixed itself for a few seconds on a point in space, while his face lit up, giving the impression to observers that the patient was witnessing a play. Thoughts woolly. Certain phenomena known in psychiatry by the name of blocking: a gesture or phrase is begun and then suddenly interrupted without apparent reason. But in particular one element aroused our particular attention: the patient talked of his blood being spilt, of his arteries which were being emptied and of his heart which kept missing a beat. He implored us to stop the hæmorrhage and not to let him be "sucked by a vampire" within the very precincts of the hospital. Sometimes he could not speak any more, and asked us for a pencil. Wrote: "I have lost my voice; my whole life is ebbing away." This living depersonalisation gave us reason to believe that the illness had reached a serious stage of development.

Several times during the course of our conversations, the patient spoke to us of a woman who when night fell came to persecute him. Having learned beforehand that his mother whom he had been very fond of was dead, and that nothing had been able to console him for her loss (his voice had considerably sunk as he spoke of her, and he shed some tears), I directed the investigation toward the maternal image. When I asked him to describe the woman who obsessed him, I might even say persecuted him, he declared that she was not an unknown person, that he knew her very well and that it was he that had killed her. It was thus a matter of finding out whether we had to deal with an unconscious guilt complex following on the death of the mother, as Freud has described in "Mourning and Melancholia." We asked the patient to talk to us about this woman in greater detail, since he had known her so well, and since also it was he who had killed her. Thus we were able to reconstruct the following story:

"I left the town where I had been a student to join the Maquis. After some months, I had news of my people. I learned that my mother had been killed point-blank by a French soldier and two of my sisters had been taken to the soldiers' quarters. Up to now, I have no news of what happened to them. I was terribly shaken by the death of my mother. Since my father had died some years before, I was the only man in the family, and my sole ambition had always been to manage to do something to make life easier for my mother and my sisters. One day we went to an estate belonging to settlers, where the agent, who was an active colonialist, had already killed two Algerian civilians. We came to his house, at night, but he wasn't there. Only his wife was at home. When she saw us, she started to cry and implored us not to kill her: 'I know you've come for my husband,' she said, 'but he isn't here. I've told him again and again not to have anything to do with politics.' We decided to wait for her husband. But

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as far as I was concerned, when I looked at that woman I thought of my mother. She was sitting in an armchair and her thoughts seemed to be elsewhere. I wondered why we didn't kill her; then all of a sudden she noticed I was looking at her. She flung herself upon me screaming 'Please, please don't kill me . . . I have children'. A moment after she was dead; I'd killed her with my knife. My commander disarmed me and ordered me to leave. I was questioned by the platoon commander a few days later. I thought I was going to be shot, but I didn't give a damn. And then I started vomiting after every meal, and I slept badly. After that this woman started coming every night and asking for my blood. But my mother's blood—where's that?"

At nightfall that evening, as soon as the patient went to bed, the room was "invaded by women" in spite of everything. It was a manifold repetition of the same woman. Every one of them had an open wound in her stomach. They were bloodless, pale and terribly thin. They tormented the young patient and insisted that he should give them back their spilt blood. At this moment the sound of running water filled the room and grew so loud that it seemed like a thundering waterfall, and the young patient saw the parquet of his room drenched with blood—his blood —while the women slowly got their colour back, and their wounds began to close up. The patient awoke, bathed with sweat and in deep distress, and remained in a state of nervous excitement until the dawn.

The young patient was treated for several weeks, after which time the oneiroid symptoms (nightmares) had practically disappeared. However, a serious deficiency remained in his personality. When he started thinking of his mother, the disembowelled woman rose up before him in redoubled horror.

CASE NO. 3. *A European policeman in a depressed state meets while under hospital treatment one of his victims, an Algerian patriot who is suffering from stupor.*

A..., 28 years old, no children. We learnt that for several years both he and his wife underwent treatment, unfortunately with no success, in order to have children. He was sent to us by his superiors because he had behaviour disturbances.

Immediate contact seemed fairly good. The patient spoke to us spontaneously about his difficulties. Satisfactory relations with his wife and parents-in-law. His trouble was that at night he heard screams which prevented him from sleeping. In fact, he told us that for the last few weeks before going to bed he shut the shutters and stopped up all the windows (it was summer) to the complete despair of his wife who was stifled by the heat. Moreover, he stuffed his ears with cotton-wool in order to make the screams seem less piercing. He sometimes even in the middle of the night turned on the wireless or put on some music in order not to hear this nocturnal uproar. He consequently explained to us at full length the whole story that was troubling him.

A few months before, he had been transferred to an anti-F.L.N. brigade. At the beginning, he was entrusted with surveying certain shops or cafés; but after some weeks he used to work almost exclusively at the police headquarters. Here he came to deal with interrogations; and these never occurred without some "knocking about." "The thing was that they never would own up to anything."

"Sometimes," he explained, "we almost wanted to tell them that if they had a bit of consideration for us they'd speak out without forcing us to spend hours tearing information word by word out of them. But you might as well talk to the wall. To all the questions we asked they'd only say 'I don't know'. Even when we asked them what their name was. If we asked them where they lived, they'd say 'I don't know'. So of course, we have to go through with it. But they scream too much. At the beginning that made me laugh. But afterwards I was a bit shaken. Nowadays as soon as I hear someone shouting I can tell you exactly at what stage of the questioning we've got to. The chap who's had two blows of the fist and a belt of the baton behind his ear has a certain way of speaking, of shouting and of saying he's innocent. After he's been left two hours strung up by his wrists he has another kind of voice. After the bath, still another. And so on. But above all it's after the electricity that it becomes really too much. You'd say that the chap was going to die any minute. Of course there are some that don't scream; those are the tough ones. But they think they're going to be killed right away. But we're not interested in killing them. What we want is information. When we're dealing with those tough ones, the first thing we do is to make them squeal; and sooner or later we manage it. That's already a victory. Afterwards we go on. Mind you, we'd like to avoid that. But they don't make things easy for us. Now I've come so as I hear their screams even when I'm at home. Especially the screams of the ones who died at the police headquarters. Doctor, I'm fed up with this job. And if you manage to cure me, I'll ask to be transferred to France. If they refuse, I'll resign."

Faced with such a picture, I prescribed sick leave. As the patient in question refused to go to hospital, I treated him privately. One day, shortly before the therapeutic treatment was due to begin, I had an urgent call from my department. When A... reached my house, my wife asked him to wait for me, but he preferred to go for a walk in the hospital grounds, and then come back to meet me. A few minutes later as I was going home I passed him on the way. He was leaning against a tree, looking overcome, trembling and drenched with sweat: in fact having an anxiety crisis. I took him into my car and drove him to my house. Once lying on the sofa, he told me he had met in the hospital one of my patients who had been questioned in the police barracks (he was an Algerian patriot) and who was under treatment for "disorders of a stuporous nature following on shock." I then learnt that the policeman had taken an active part in inflicting torture on my patient. I administered some sedatives which calmed A...'s anxiety. After he had gone, I went to the house in the hospital where the patriot was being cared for. The personnel had noticed nothing; but the patient could not be found. Finally we managed to discover him in a toilet where he was trying to commit suicide: he on his side had recognized the policeman and thought that he had come to look for him and take him back again to the barracks.

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Milton Glaser

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CASE NO. 4. *The murder by two young Algerians 13 and 14 years old respectively of their European playmate.*

We had been asked to give expert medical advice in a legal matter. Two young Algerians, 13 and 14 years old, pupils in a primary school, were accused of having killed one of their European school-mates. They admitted having done it. The crime was reconstructed, and photos were added to the record. Here one of the children could be seen holding the victim while the other struck at him with a knife. The little defendants did not go back on their declarations. We had long conversations with them. We here reproduce the most characteristic of their remarks:

a) The boy 13 years old:

"We weren't a bit cross with him. Every Thursday we used to go and play with catapults together, on the hill above the village. He was a good friend of ours. He usn't to go to school any more because he wanted to be a mason like his father. One day we decided to kill him, because the Europeans want to kill all the Arabs. We can't kill big people. But we could kill ones like him, because he was the same age as us. We didn't know how to kill him. We wanted to throw him into a ditch, but he'd only have been hurt. So we got the knife at home and we killed him."

"But why did you pick on him?"

"Because he used to play with us. Another boy wouldn't have gone up the hill with us."

"And yet you were pals?"

"Well then, why do they want to kill us? His father is in the militia and he said we ought to have our throats cut."

"But he didn't say anything to you?"

"Him? No."

"You know he is dead now."

"Yes."

"What does being dead mean?"

"When it's all finished, you go to heaven."

"Was it you that killed him?"

"Yes."

"Does having killed somebody worry you?"

"No, since they want to kill us, so . . ."

"Do you mind being in prison?"

"No."

b) The boy 14 years old:

This young defendant was in marked contrast with his school-fellow. He was already almost a man, and an adult in his muscular control, his appearance and the content of his replies. He did not deny having killed either. Why had he killed? He did not reply to the question but asked me had I ever seen a European in prison. Had there ever been a European arrested and sent to prison after the murder of an Algerian? I replied that in fact I had never seen any Europeans in prison.

"And yet there are Algerians killed every day, aren't there?"

"Yes."

"So why are only Algerians found in the prisons? Can you explain that to me?"

"No. But tell me why you killed this boy who was your friend."

"I'll tell you why. You've heard tell of the Rivet[1] business?"

"Yes."

"Two of my family were killed then. At home, they said that the French had sworn to kill us all, one after the other. And did they arrest a single Frenchman for all those Algerians who were killed?"

"I don't know."

"Well, nobody at all was arrested. I wanted to take to the mountains but I was too young. So X... and I said we'd kill a European."

"Why?"

"In your opinion, what should we have done?"

"I don't know. But you are a child and what is happening concerns grown-up people."

"But they kill children too . . ."

"That is no reason for killing your friend."

"Well, kill him I did. Now you can do what you like."

"Had your friend done anything to harm you?"

"Not a thing."

"Well?"

"Well, there you are . . . ."

[1] *Rivet is a village which in 1956 was invaded by the militia who dragged forty men from their beds and afterwards murdered them.*

[Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth*/ Excerpts]

[STATUES OF WHITE GENERALS]

A WORLD DIVIDED into compartments, a motionless, Manicheistic world, a world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge; a world which is sure of itself, which crushes with its stones the backs flayed by whips: this is the colonial world. The native is a being hemmed in; apartheid is simply one form of the division into compartments of the colonial world. The first thing which the native learns is to stay in his place, and not to go beyond certain limits. This is why the dreams of the native are always of muscular prowess; his dreams are of action and of aggression. I dream I am jumping, swimming, running, climbing; I dream that I burst out laughing, that I span a river in one stride, or that I am followed by a flood of motor-cars which never catch up with me. During the period of colonisation, the native never stops achieving his freedom from nine in the evening until six in the morning.

The colonised man will first manifest this aggressiveness which has been deposited in his bones against his own people. This is the period when the niggers beat each other up, and the police and magistrates do not know which way to turn when faced with the astonishing waves of crime in North Africa. When the native is confronted with the colonial order of things, he finds he is in a state of permanent tension. The settler's world is a hostile world, which spurns the native, but at the same time it is a world of which he is envious. We have seen that the native never

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ceases to dream of putting himself in the place of the settler — not of becoming the settler but of substituting himself for the settler. This hostile world, ponderous and aggressive because it fends off the colonised masses with all the harshness it is capable of, represents not merely a hell from which the swiftest flight possible is desirable, but also a paradise close at hand which is guarded by terrible watchdogs.

The native is always on the alert, for since he can only make out with difficulty the many symbols of the colonial world, he is never sure whether or not he has crossed the frontier. Confronted with a world ruled by the settler, the native is always presumed guilty. But the native's guilt is never a guilt which he accepts; it is rather a kind of curse, a sort of sword of Damocles, for, in his innermost spirit, the native admits no accusation. He is overpowered but not tamed; he is treated as an inferior but he is not convinced of his inferiority. He is patiently waiting until the settler is off his guard to fly at him. The native's muscles are always tensed. You can't say that he is terrorized, or even apprehensive. He is in fact ready at a moment's notice to exchange the *rôle* of the quarry for that of the hunter. The native is an oppressed person whose permanent dream is to become the persecutor. The symbols of social order — the police, the bugle-calls in the barracks, military parades and the waving flags — are at one and the same time inhibitory and stimulating: for they do not convey the message "Don't dare to budge"; rather, they cry out "Get ready to attack." And, in fact, if the native had any tendency to fall asleep and to forget, the settler's hauteur and the settler's anxiety to test the strength of the colonial system would remind him at every turn that the great show-down cannot be put off indefinitely . . . .

The settler-native relationship is a mass relationship. The settler pits brute force against the weight of numbers. He is an exhibitionist. His preoccupation with security makes him remind the native out loud that there he alone is master. The settler keeps alive in the native an anger which he deprives of outlet; the native is trapped in the tight links of the chains of colonialism. But we have seen that inwardly the settler can only achieve a pseudo petrification. The native's muscular tension finds outlet regularly in bloodthirsty explosions — in tribal warfare, in feuds between septs, and in quarrels between individuals.

Where individuals are concerned, a positive negation of common sense is evident. While the settler or the policeman has the right the live-long day to strike the native, to insult him and to make him crawl to them, you will see the native reaching for his knife at the slightest hostile or aggressive glance cast on him by another native; for the last resort of the native is to defend his personality *vis-à-vis* his brother.

[Zombies and Djinns]

We see the native's emotional sensibility exhausting itself in dances which are more or less ecstatic. This is why any study of the colonial world should take into consideration the phenomena of the dance and of possession. The native's relaxation takes precisely the form of a muscular orgy in which the most acute aggressivity and the most impelling violence are canalised, transformed and conjured away. The circle of the dance is a permissive circle: it protects and permits. At certain times on certain days, men and women come together at a given place, and there, under the solemn eye of the tribe, fling themselves into a seemingly unorganised pantomime, which is in reality extremely systematic, in which by various means — shakes of the head, bending of the spinal column, throwing of the whole body backwards — may be deciphered as in an open book the huge effort of a community to exorcise itself, to liberate itself, to explain itself. There are no limits — inside the circle. The hillock up which you have toiled as if to be nearer to the moon; the river bank down which you slip as if to show the connection between the dance and ablutions, cleansing and purification — these are sacred places. There are no limits — for in reality your purpose in coming together is to allow the accumulated libido, the hampered aggressivity to dissolve as in a volcanic eruption. Symbolical killings, fantastic rides, imaginary mass murders — all must be brought out. The evil humours are undammed, and flow away with a din as of molten lava.

One step further and you are completely possessed. In fact, these are actually organised *séances* of possession and exorcism; they include vampirism, possession by djinns, by zombies, and by Legba, the famous god of the Voodoo. This disintegrating of the personality, this splitting and dissolution, all this fulfills a primordial function in the organism of the colonial world. When they set out, the men and women were impatient, stamping their feet in a state of excitement; when they return, peace has been restored to the village; it is once more calm and unmoved.

During the struggle for freedom, a marked alienation from these practices is observed. The native's back is to the wall, the knife is at his throat (or, more precisely, the electrode at his genitals): he will have no more call for his fancies. After centuries of unreality, after having wallowed in the most outlandish phantoms, at long last the native, gun in hand, stands face to face with the only forces which contend for his life — the forces of colonialism. And the youth of a colonised country, growing up in an atmosphere of shot and fire, may well make a mock of, and does not hesitate to pour scorn upon the zombies of

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his ancestors, the horses with two heads, the dead who rise again, and the djinns who rush into your body while you yawn. The native discovers reality and transforms it into the pattern of his customs, into the practice of violence and into his plan for freedom.

[On Decolonisation]

"The last shall be first and the first last." Decolonisation is the putting into practice of this sentence. That is why, if we try to describe it, all decolonisation is successful.

The naked truth of decolonisation evokes for us the searing bullets and bloodstained knives which emanate from it. For if the last shall be first, this will only come to pass after a murderous and decisive struggle between the two protagonists. That affirmed intention to place the last at the head of things, and to make them climb at a pace (too quickly, some say) the well-known steps which characterise an organised society, can only triumph if we use all means to turn the scale, including, of course, that of violence.

You do not turn any society, however primitive it may be, upside-down with such a programme if you are not decided from the very beginning, that is to say from the actual formulation of that programme, to overcome all the obstacles that you will come across in so doing. The native who decides to put the programme into practice, and to become its moving force, is ready for violence at all times. From birth it is clear to him that this narrow world, strewn with prohibitions, can only be called in question by absolute violence . . . .

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations. In the colonies it is the policeman and the soldier who are the official, instituted go-betweens, the spokesmen of the settler and his rule of oppression. In capitalist societies the educational system, whether lay or clerical, the structure of moral reflexes handed down from father to son, the exemplary honesty of workers who are given a medal after fifty years of good and loyal service, and the affection which springs from harmonious relations and good behaviour — all these esthetic expressions of respect for the established order serve to create around the exploited person an atmosphere of submission and of inhibition which lightens the task of policing considerably. In the capitalist countries a multitude of moral teachers, counsellors and "bewilderers" separate the exploited from those in power. In the colonial countries, on the contrary, the policeman and the soldier, by their immediate presence and their frequent and direct action maintain contact with the native and advise him by means of rifle-butts and napalm not to budge. It is obvious here that the agents of government speak the language of pure force. The intermediary does not lighten the oppression, nor seek to hide the domination; he shows them up and puts them into practice with the clear conscience of an upholder of the peace; yet he is the bringer of violence into the home and into the mind of the native.

[The Colonial Context]

The customs of the colonised people, their traditions, their myths — above all, their myths — are the very sign of that poverty of spirit and of their constitutional depravity. That is why we must put the DDT which destroys parasites, the bearers of disease, on the same level as the Christian religion which wages war on embryonic heresies and instincts, and on evil as yet unborn. The recession of yellow fever and the advance of evangelisation form part of the same balance-sheet. . . .

At times this Manicheism goes to its logical conclusion and dehumanises the native, or to speak plainly it turns him into an animal. In fact, the terms the settler uses when he mentions the native are zoological terms. He speaks of the yellow man's reptilian motions, of the stink of the native quarter, of breeding swarms, of foulness, of spawn, of gesticulations. When the settler seeks to describe the native fully in exact terms he constantly refers to the bestiary. The European rarely hits on a picturesque style; but the native, who knows what is in the mind of the settler, guesses at once what he is thinking of. Those hordes of vital statistics, those hysterical masses, those faces bereft of all humanity, those distended bodies which are like nothing on earth, that mob without beginning or end, those children who seem to belong to nobody, that laziness stretched out in the sun, that vegetative rhythm of life — all this forms part of the colonial vocabulary. General de Gaulle speaks of "the yellow multitudes" and François Mauriac of the black, brown and yellow masses which soon will be unleashed. The native knows all this, and laughs to himself every time he spots an allusion to the animal world in the other's words. For he knows that he is not an animal; and it is precisely at the moment he realises his humanity that he begins to sharpen the weapons with which he will secure its victory.

As soon as the native begins to pull on his moorings, and to cause anxiety to the settler, he is handed over to well-meaning souls who in cultural congresses point out to him the specificity and wealth of Western values. But every time Western values are mentioned they produce in the native a sort of stiffening or muscular lock-jaw. During the period of decolonisation, the native's reason is appealed to. He is offered definite values, he is told frequently that decolonisation need not mean regression, and

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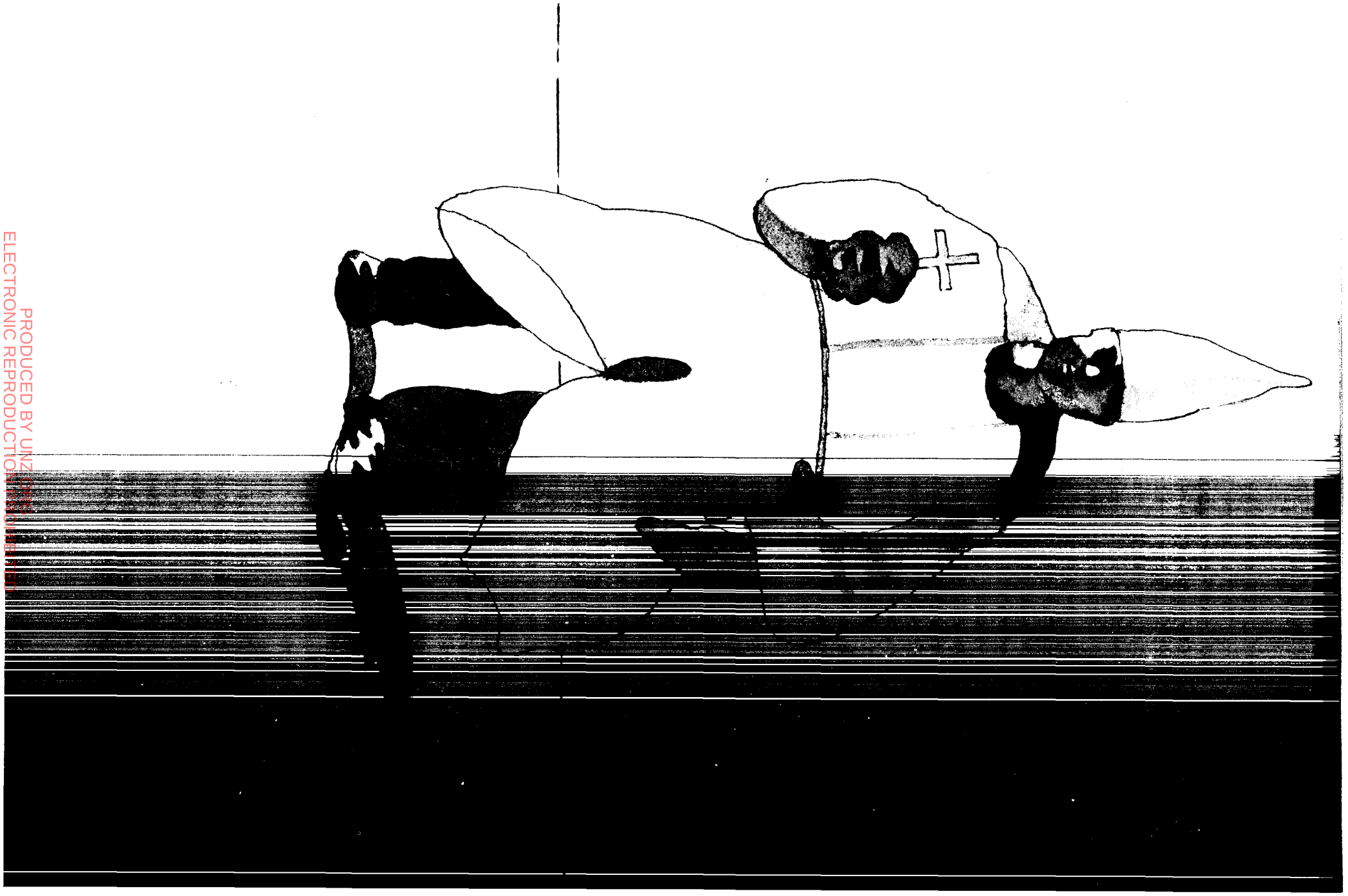

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that he must put his trust in qualities which are well-tried, solid and highly esteemed. But it so happens that when the native hears a speech about Western culture he pulls out his knife — or at least he makes sure it is within reach. The violence with which the supremacy of white values is affirmed and the aggressiveness which has permeated the victory of these values over the ways of life and of thought of the native mean that, in revenge, the native laughs in mockery when Western values are mentioned in front of him. In the colonial context the settler only ends his work of breaking in the native when the latter admits loudly and intelligibly the supremacy of the white man's values. In the period of decolonisation, the colonised masses mock at these very values, insult them and vomit them up.

This phenomenon is ordinarily masked because, during the period of decolonisation, certain colonised intellectuals have begun a dialogue with the bourgeoisie of the colonialist country. During this phase, the indigenous population is discerned only as an indistinct mass. The few native personalities whom the colonialist bourgeoisie have come to know here and there have not sufficient influence on that immediate discernment to give rise to nuances. On the other hand, during the period of liberation, the colonialist bourgeoisie looks feverishly for contacts with the *élite*, and it is with these *élite* that the familiar dialogue concerning values is carried on. The colonialist bourgeoisie, when it realises that it is impossible for it to maintain its domination over the colonial countries, decides to carry out a rear-guard action with regard to culture, values, techniques and so on. Now what we must never forget is that the immense majority of colonised peoples is oblivious of these problems. For a colonised people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity. But this dignity has nothing to do with the dignity of the human individual: for that human individual has never heard tell of it. All that the native has seen in his country is that they can freely arrest him, beat him, starve him: and no professor of ethics, no priest has ever come to be beaten in his place, nor to share their bread with him. As far as the native is concerned, morality is very concrete; it is to silence the settler's defiance, to break his flaunting violence — in a word, to put him out of the picture.

[The Intellectuals]

In the colonial countries where a real struggle for freedom has taken place, where the blood of the people has flowed and where the length of the period of armed warfare has favoured the backward surge of intellectuals towards bases grounded in the people, we can observe a genuine eradication of the superstructure built by these intellectuals from the bourgeois colonialist environment. The colonialist bourgeoisie, in its narcissistic dialogue, expounded by the members of its universities, had in fact deeply implanted in the minds of the colonised intellectual that the essential qualities remain eternal in spite of all the blunders men may make: the essential qualities of the West, of course. The native intellectual accepted the cogency of these ideas, and deep down in his brain you could always find a vigilant sentinel ready to defend the Greco-Latin pedestal. Now it so happens that during the struggle for liberation, at the moment that the native intellectual comes into touch again with his people, this artificial sentinel is turned into dust. All the Mediterranean values — the triumph of the human individual, of clarity and of beauty — become lifeless, colourless knick knacks. All those speeches seem like collections of dead words; those values which seemed to uplift the soul are revealed as worthless, simply because they have nothing to do with the concrete conflict in which the people is engaged. . . .

But it so happens sometimes that decolonisation occurs in areas which have not been sufficiently shaken by the struggle for liberation, and there may be found those same know-all, smart, wily intellectuals. We find intact in them the manners and forms of thought picked up during their association with the colonialist bourgeoisie. Spoilt children of yesterday's colonialism and of today's national governments, they organise the loot of whatever national resources exist. Without pity, they use today's national distress as a means of getting on through scheming and legal robbery, by import-export combines, limited liability companies, gambling on the stock-exchange, or unfair promotion. They are insistent in their demands for the nationalisation of commerce, that is to say the reservation of markets and advantageous bargains for nationals only. As far as doctrine is concerned, they proclaim the pressing necessity of nationalising the robbery of the nation. In this arid phase of national life, the so-called period of austerity, the success of their depredations is swift to call forth the violence and anger of the people . . . .

Objectively, the intellectual behaves in this phase like a common opportunist. In fact he has not stopped manœuvring. There is never any question of his being either rejected or welcomed by the people. What they ask is simply that all resources should be pooled. . . .

The entire action of these nationalist political parties during the colonial period is action of the electoral type: a string of philosophico-political dissertations on the themes of the rights of peoples to self-determination, the rights of man to freedom from hunger and human dignity, and the unceasing affirmation of the principle: "One man, one vote." The national political parties never lay stress

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upon the necessity of a trial of armed strength, for the good reason that their objective is not the radical overthrowing of the system. Pacifists and legalists, they are in fact partisans of order, the new order — but to the colonialist bourgeoisie they put bluntly enough the demand which to them is the main one: "Give us more power." On the specific question of violence, the *élite* are ambiguous. They are violent in their words and reformist in their attitudes. When the nationalist political leaders *say* something, they make quite clear that they do not really *think* it.

This characteristic on the part of the nationalist political parties should be interpreted in the light both of the make-up of their leaders and the nature of their followings. The rank-and-file of a nationalist party is urban. The workers, primary schoolteachers, artisans and small shopkeepers who have begun to profit — at a discount, to be sure — from the colonial set-up, have special interests at heart. What this sort of following demands is the betterment of their particular lot: increased salaries, for example. The dialogue between these political parties and colonialism is never broken off. Improvements are discussed, such as full electoral representation, the liberty of the press, and liberty of association. Reforms are debated. Thus it need not astonish anyone to notice that a large number of natives are militant members of the branches of political parties which stem from the mother country. These natives fight under an abstract watchword: "Government by the workers," and they forget that in their country it should be *nationalist* watchwords which are first in the field. The native intellectual has clothed his aggressiveness in his barely veiled desire to assimilate himself to the colonial world. He has used his aggressiveness to serve his own individual interests.

Thus there is very easily brought into being a kind of class of affranchised slaves, or slaves who are individually free. What the intellectual demands is the right to multiply the emancipated, and the opportunity to organise a genuine class of emancipated citizens. On the other hand, the mass of the people have no intention of standing by and watching individuals increase their chances of success. What they demand is not the settler's position of status, but the settler's place. The immense majority of natives want the settler's farm. For them, there is no question of entering into competition with the settler. They want to take his place.

The peasantry is systematically disregarded for the most part by the propaganda put out by the nationalist parties. And it is clear that in the colonial countries the peasants alone are revolutionary, for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain. The starving peasant, outside the class system, is the first among the exploited to discover that only violence pays.

[On Non-Violence]

COLONIALISM IS NOT a thinking machine, nor a body endowed with reasoning faculties. It is violence in its natural state, and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence.

At the decisive moment, the colonialist bourgeoisie, which up till then has remained inactive, comes into the field. It introduces that new idea which is in proper parlance a creation of the colonial situation: non-violence. In its simplest form this non-violence signifies to the intellectual and economic *élite* of the colonised country that the bourgeoisie has the same interests as them and that it is therefore urgent and indispensable to come to terms for the public good. Non-violence is an attempt to settle the colonial problem around a green baize table, before any regrettable act has been performed or irreparable gesture made, before any blood has been shed. But if the masses, without waiting for the chairs to be arranged around the baize table, listen to their own voice and begin committing outrages and setting fire to buildings, the *élites* and the nationalist bourgeois parties will be seen rushing to the colonialists to exclaim "This is very serious! We do not know how it will end; we must find a solution — some sort of compromise. . . ."

If this nationalist reformist tendency which often takes the form of a kind of caricature of trade unionism decides to take action, it will only do so in a highly peaceful fashion, through stoppages of work in the few industries which have been set up in the towns, mass demonstrations to cheer the leaders, and the boycotting of buses or of imported commodities. All these forms of action serve at one and the same time to bring pressure to bear on the forces of colonialism, and to allow the people to work off their energy. This practice of therapy by hibernation, this sleep-cure used on the people, may sometimes be successful; thus out of the conference around the green baize table comes the political selectiveness which enables Monsieur M'ba, the president of the Republic of Gabon to state in all seriousness on his arrival in Paris for an official visit: "Gabon is independent, but between Gabon and France nothing has changed; everything goes on as before." In fact, the only change is that Monsieur M'ba is president of the Gabonese Republic and that he is received by the president of the French Republic.

[A Ripening Consciousness]

WHEN A POLITICAL LEADER calls a mass meeting, we may say that there is blood in the air. Yet the same leader very often is above all anxious to "make a show" of force, so that in fact he need not use it. But the agitation which

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ensues, the coming and going, the listening to speeches, seeing the people assembled in one place, with the police all around, the military demonstrations, arrests, and the deportation of the leaders — all this hubbub makes the people think that the moment has come for them to take action. In these times of instability the political parties multiply their appeals to the left for calm, while on their right they scan the horizon, trying to make out the liberal intentions of colonialism.

In the same way the people make use of certain episodes in the life of the community in order to hold themselves ready and to keep alive their revolutionary zeal. For example, the gangster who holds up the police set on to track him down for days on end, or who dies in single combat after having killed four or five policemen, or who commits suicide in order not to give away his accomplices — these types light the way for the people, form the blueprints for action and become heroes. Obviously, it's a waste of breath to say that such-and-such a hero is a thief, a scoundrel or a reprobate. If the act for which he is prosecuted by the colonial authorities is an act exclusively directed against a colonialist person or colonialist property, the demarcation line is definite and manifest. The process of identification is automatic.

[Dien Bien Phu Here, Dien Bien Phu There]

The uprising of the new nation and the breaking down of colonial structures are the result of two causes: either of a violent struggle of the people in their own right, or of action on the part of surrounding colonised peoples which acts as a brake on the colonial regime in question.

A colonised people is not alone. In spite of all that colonialism can do, its frontiers remain open to new ideas and echoes from the world outside. It discovers that violence is in the atmosphere, that it here and there bursts out, and here and there sweeps away the colonial regime — that same violence which fulfills for the native a *rôle* that is not simply informatory, but also operative. The great victory of the Vietnamese people at Dien Bien Phu is no longer, strictly speaking, a Vietnamese victory. Since July 1954, the question which the colonised peoples have asked themselves has been "What must be done to bring about another Dien Bien Phu? How can we manage it?" Not a single colonised individual could ever again doubt the possibility of a Dien Bien Phu; the only problem was how best to use the forces at their disposal, how to organise them, and when to bring them into action. This encompassing violence does not work upon the colonised people only; it modifies the attitude of the colonialists who become aware of manifold Dien Bien Phus. This is why a veritable panic takes hold of the colonialist governments in turn. Their purpose is to capture the vanguard, to turn the movement of liberation towards the right, and to disarm the people: quick, quick, let's decolonise. Decolonise the Congo before it turns into another Algeria. Vote the constitutional framework for all Africa, create the French *Communauté*, renovate that same *Communauté*, but for God's sake let's decolonise quick . . . And they decolonise at such a rate that they impose independence on Houphouët-Boigny. To the strategy of Dien Bien Phu, defined by the colonised peoples, the colonialist replies by the strategy of encirclement — based on the respect of the sovereignty of states.

[Revolutionary Rudeness and the Foreign Press]

The atmosphere of violence, after having coloured all the colonial phase, continues to dominate national life, for as we have already said, the Third World is not cut off from the rest. Quite on the contrary, it is at the middle of the whirlpool. This is why the statesmen of under-developed countries keep up indefinitely the tone of aggressiveness and exasperation in their public speeches which in the normal way ought to have disappeared. Herein, also, may be found the reasons for that lack of politeness so often spoken of in connection with newly established rulers. But what is less visible is the extreme courtesy of these same rulers in their contacts with their brothers or their comrades. Discourtesy is first and foremost a manner to be used in dealings with the others, with the former colonists who come to observe and to investigate. The "ex-native" too often gets the impression that these reports are already written. The photos which illustrate the article are simply a proof that one knows what one is talking about, and that one has visited the country. The report intends to verify the evidence: everything's going badly out there since we left. Frequently reporters complain of being badly received, of being forced to work under bad conditions and of being fenced round by indifference or hostility: all this is quite normal. The nationalist leaders know that international opinion is formed solely by the Western press. Now, when a journalist from the West asks us questions, it is seldom in order to help us. In the Algerian war, for example, even the most liberal of the French reporters never ceased to use ambiguous terms in describing our struggle. When we reproached them for this, they replied in all good faith that they were being objective. For the native, objectivity is always directed against him.

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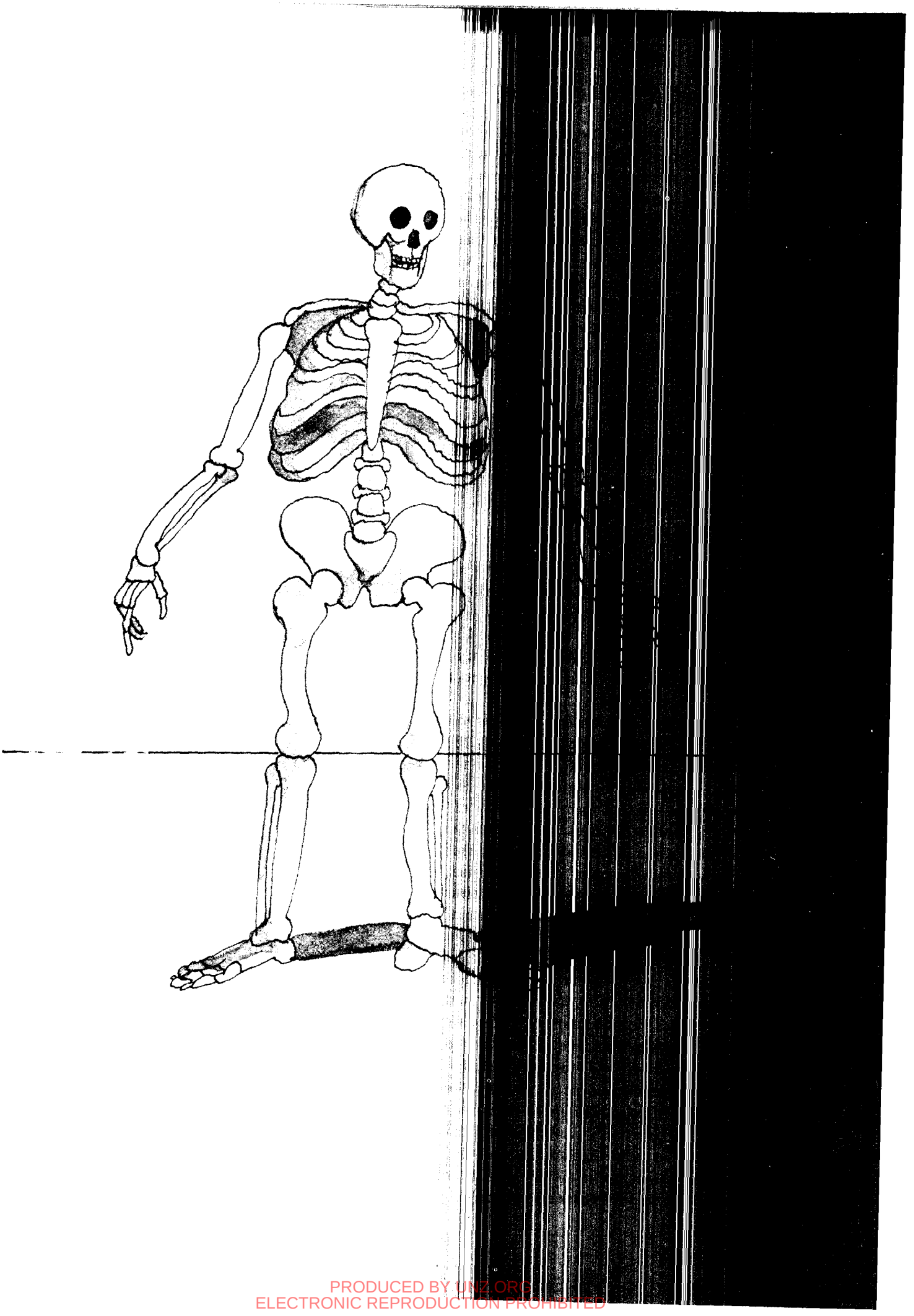

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[Nikita and Fidel at the UN]

When Mr. Khrushchev brandishes his shoe at the United Nations, or thumps the table with it, there's not a single ex-native, nor any representative of an under-developed country, who laughs. For what Mr. Khrushchev shows the colonised countries which are looking on is that he, the moujik, who moreover is the possessor of space-rockets, treats these miserable capitalists in the way that they deserve. In the same way, Castro sitting in military uniform in the United Nations Organization does not scandalize the underdeveloped countries. What Castro demonstrates is the consciousness he has of the continuing existence of the rule of violence. The astonishing thing is that he did not come into UNO with a machinegun; but if he had, would anyone have minded? All the *jacqueries* and desperate deeds, all those bands armed with cutlasses or axes find their nationality in the implacable struggle which opposes socialism and capitalism.

[Cold War and Third World]

Strengthened by the unconditional support of the socialist countries, the colonised peoples fling themselves with whatever arms they have against the impregnable citadel of colonialism. If this citadel is invulnerable to knives and naked fists, it is no longer so when we decide to take into account the context of the cold war.

In this fresh juncture, the Americans take their *rôle* of patron of international capitalism very seriously. Early on, they advise the European countries to decolonise in friendly fashion. Later on, they do not hesitate to proclaim first the respect for and then the support of the principle of "Africa for the Africans." The United States is not afraid today of stating officially that they are the defenders of the right of all peoples to self-determination. Mr. Mennen Williams' last journey is only the illustration of the consciousness which the Americans have that the Third World ought not to be sacrificed. From then on we understand why the violence of the native is only hopeless if we compare it in the abstract to the military machine of the oppressor. On the other hand, if we situate that violence in the dynamics of the international situation, we see at once that it constitutes a terrible menace for the oppressor. Persistent *jacqueries* and Mau-Mau disturbances unbalance the colony's economic life but do not endanger the mother-country. What is more important in the eyes of imperialism is the opportunity for socialist propaganda to infiltrate among the masses and to contaminate them. This is already a serious danger in the cold war; but what would happen to that colony in case of real war, riddled as it is by murderous guerrillas?

Thus capitalism realises that its military strategy has everything to lose by the outbreak of nationalist wars. Again, within the framework of peaceful co-existence, all colonies are destined to disappear, and in the long run neutralism is destined to be respected by capitalism. What must at all costs be avoided is strategic insecurity: the break-through of enemy doctrine into the masses and the deep-rooted hatred of millions of men. The colonised peoples are very well aware of these imperatives which rule international political life; for this reason even those who thunder denunciations of violence take their decisions and act in terms of this universal violence. Today, peaceful co-existence between the two *blocs* provokes and feeds violence in the colonial countries.

[On Revolutionary Violence]

For the native, this violence represents the absolute line of action. The militant is also a man who works. The questions that the organisation asks the militant bear the mark of this way of looking at things: "Where have you worked? With whom? What have you accomplished?" The group requires that each individual perform an irrevocable action. In Algeria, for example, where almost all the men who called on the people to join in the national struggle were condemned to death or searched for by the French police, confidence was proportional to the hopelessness of each case. You could be sure of a new recruit when he could no longer go back into the colonial system. This mechanism, it seems, had existed in Kenya among the Mau-Mau, who required that each member of the group should strike a blow at the victim. . . .

The native's violence unifies the people. By its very structure, colonialism is separatist and regionalist. Colonialism does not simply state the existence of tribes; it also re-inforces it and separates them. The colonial system encourages chieftaincies and keeps alive the old Marabout confraternities. Violence is in action all-inclusive and national. It follows that it is closely involved in the liquidation of regionalism and of tribalism. Thus the national parties show no pity at all towards the caids and the customary chiefs. . . .

At the level of individuals, violence is a cleansing force. It frees the native from his inferiority complex and from his despair and inaction; it makes him fearless and restores his self-respect. Even if the armed struggle has been symbolic and the nation is demobilised through a rapid movement of decolonisation, the people have the time to see that the liberation has been the business of each and all and that the leader has no special merit.

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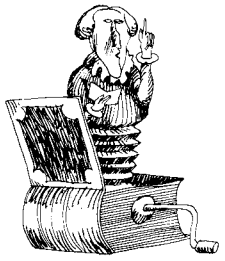

THE NATIONAL REVIEW: A BUNCH OF ANTI-GNOSTICS?

by Warren Sloat

PERHAPS THE MOST IMPORTANT LIBERAL MYTH about the American Right Wing is that it consists solely of meatheads, the crazed, and people who move their lips while reading the New York Daily News editorial page.

One inculcated with these prejudices is disoriented when he catches a glimpse of the Tory Right Wing through the pages of the National Review. Here the liberal world is turned upside down. NR, the leading American conservative magazine, regularly prints "deep thoughts" about what all of us in our most solemn moments call "the human condition." From this point of view, it is the *liberal*, with his egalitarian educational theories, who is the anti-intellectual. Shallow liberalism is depicted as cheerily glossing over reasonable argument and tinkering with political experiment.

Liberals tend to think that their differences with conservatives are matters of foreign and domestic policy and economic theory, and thus a fit subject for dialogue. But, over the last few years, NR has begun to evolve (or, as they would prefer, rediscover) the conviction that it is useless to argue about public issues when the basis of disagreement is much more basic: essentially incompatible views of the nature of man. The conservative idea-cluster, held together by a subject-predicate logic, is grouped into original sin, a "divine plan," and man's dual nature of flesh and spirit. They have discovered in the process that the liberal is a religious heretic.

More precisely, the Liberal (which they capitalize) is a Gnostic. The Gnostic vision, expressed in the Gospel of Thomas, is that the kingdom of heaven is spread over the earth and men perceive it not. To the Tory, every liberal measure is informed by Gnosticism, the attempt to make Christianity this-worldly (immanent) rather than other-worldly (transcendent). The liberal, according to the Tory, is seeking ultimate meaning in this world, and relativism is but a step away.

The Right Wing has become convinced that Gnosticism, whether in Communist or liberal form, is the menace of our civilization and that in discussing political issues the conservative cannot yield because he believes that the maintenance of a world-view is at stake.

To show how all-pervasive this rationale is, we have L. Brent Bozell reviewing *Gideon's Trumpet*, by Anthony Lewis:

. . . the underlying issue of the Gideon case was whether Florida and four other states should be forcibly reconciled, before another day had passed, to the Enlightened Opinion that a fair trial is impossible without counsel; or should be allowed to embrace it in their own good time—and in the process preserve a State's Right from judicial nationalization. Needless to say, Enlightenment Now won hands down, nine justices to none.

To a man with his mind fixed on the transcendent truths, the conviction of a man later found innocent, as Gideon was, is hardly disturbing, nor are a few generations of injustice a great matter in the big picture of the West. Gnostics who are overmuch concerned with this world are regarded as foolish enthusiasts. NR has remarked editorially that St. Paul advised slaves to obey their masters because he knew there are things more important than slavery, and in the folklore of NR, "freedom now" is a concern of "unwashed chanters" (because hatred of the body, expressed in a multitude of ways, is a continuing theme of conservatism). This brand of Tory transcendence is helpful in bearing the sufferings of others with good cheer.

ALMOST ANY ATTEMPT to improve the lot of humanity, to the American Right is a disguised attempt to bring paradise to earth—a Gnostic trick. Liberalism and Communism, Bozell told a rapturous crowd at Madison Square Garden in 1962, are twin Gostic sisters:

The liberals' hope of perfecting man through the agency of man is collapsing, in part, because liberals recognize that all of the Western experiments in this kind of thing, reaching back to the heady days of the Enlightenment, have tragically foundered; but more important, because liberals are coming to understand, even if darkly, that the logic of their analyses and ambitions point them down a road they cannot follow: that the Gnostic dream of an earthly paradise can be realized (as Khrushchev knows); not by changing society, but by changing man—by transmutative surgery on the soul. It follows that if Gnosticism is ever to triumph, it will triumph in the Communist form.

A similar view was expressed in a bit of verse by Geary Blankenship, published in NR early last year, which attacked peace councils because the aim of their participants is "heaven here and now." Once again, comment about specifics of such a council is not worth examination. It is indefensible, not because our negotiators might err, but because it attempts to solve a human problem.

Where else do we find man shooting

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more arrogantly for heaven here and now than at the United Nations? As Gerhard Niemeyer wrote:

Comte, when he attacked the religion of the worship of the supernatural, had to create a new religion in which the worship of something immanent took the place of the worship of a transcendent God. This became the worship of humanity and the ethic of "altruism" . . . The focus of worship among the modern secularists is on Humanity, their hope is in the equalization and increasing similarity of all nations, the "abolition" of war, the international cooperation. The ethic of internationalism has become a full-fledged substitute for Christian ethics.

All this was but prelude to Frederick Wilhelmsen's "Theology of Survival." Unable to excite any tension between the idea of justice and the given world in any other sphere, the Tory pours it into the apocalypse of a vanquished Communist world:

The West . . . has lost the courage to face up to the only political end which can really interest any decent man in the second half of the twentieth century; the business of beating communism or getting beaten at the try.

Interest, then, in any other political end is indecent.

Where, the Tory asks, do these Gnostics get their lunatic notions, trying to find some sort of nonviolence in the Christian gospel? Close examination reveals that it is just the same old heresy: earth-centered salvation. According to another NR regular, Erik Ritter von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, this is based on a spurious myth: the poverty of Jesus. Let's give the poor their due, Kuehnelt-Leddihn's analysis implies, but let's not forget, as it is so often forgotten these days, that the *rich* have some rights, too!

Jesus, he pointed out, was fairly well-off, in all likelihood; a financial condition He shares with the readers of NR, who have an average annual income of more than $19,500. Note, however, that they have never claimed any special relationship to Jesus purely on *that* basis. They prefer to let the poor be the presumptuous ones.

"In more than one sense," he wrote, "Jesus was the King of Kings." Contrary to the proletarian myth about Joseph the Carpenter, actually he could have been an architect or a building contractor, for he was a landowner and of royal blood. It is also likely that the Nazarene version of the social register was on the night table, for "Mary was the niece or grandniece of St. Elizabeth, who belonged to the highest social layer."

This myth is the basis of the cry of "Exploitation!" fostered by misbegotten proletarians who, unlike the patrician, monarchist Kuehnelt-Leddihn, are unaware of the obvious relationship that ignorance and laziness have with differences in status.

"We will be hard-pressed to find any exploitation or poverty in the world these days," he writes. His article concludes with the implication that the number one social problem among the poor is probably covetousness.

Russell Kirk, a regular NR columnist, has written:

Christian orthodoxy looks upon poverty as no evil, but rather as an occasion for virtue, to be rewarded by God. The Bible and the Fathers of the Church repeatedly speak of poverty—even involuntary poverty—as a blessed state . . . But, ignoring this teaching, some ministers of the Gospel become unconscious Marxists, considering material want the greatest of evils, and inveighing against every inequality of condition.

THE GNOSTICS, conservatives reason, are attempting to prove false the prophecy of Jesus—that the poor will always be with us—as a portion of their policy of mocking religion generally. But the poor, instead of rejoicing for the blessedness of their state, have been taken in by the Gnostic heresy. Fortunately, this blessedness extends even to involuntary poverty, which the poor, with the help of the no-policy, will probably continue to enjoy for some time.

The poor, however, are not the only ones involved. The abolition of poverty would also be a direct attack upon the rich, as Kirk noted, because if no one is poor, the wealthy have no occasion for virtue, no object for good works. Eliminating poverty would thus be a disservice to not only the poor, but the wealthy as well.

Conservatives often make the point that they do not consider the Negro to be inferior, only *different*. In the same sense, the poor are *different*, and ought to remain so. This, against the grain of a collectivist age, is the conservative's defense of *diversity*.

The problem for conservatives is that liberals rarely come out flat to admit that they want to set up an earthly paradise. They usually speak of "decent living wage" and other evasive terms. Replying in NR to a remark by Fr. George Dunne, S.J., that a social system based on exploitation must be destroyed, Bozell, defending an exploitative world of misery, has implied that if Fr. Dunne is not an atheist, it is because he has not thought his system through.

"The Strange Drift of Liberal Catholicism," the title of Bozell's attack on Fr. Dunne, brings us to the latest step in the war against Gnosticism: an exposure of its ascendency in the churches, including even the Roman Catholic Church.

Several important figures on the NR staff are conservative Catholics, and the non-Catholics on the staff, we are told, look to the Church as a conservative force in the world.

NR THREW ITSELF WHOLEHEARTEDLY into the attack on *aggiornamento*—the updating of the Church—in the May 4, 1965 issue, the cover theme of which was "What, in the name of God, is going on in the Catholic Church?" The consensus was that it is something sinister (in the root sense of that word). A "vacillating Vatican that tolerates agitating nuns," wrote Thomas Molnar (apparently referring to nuns in the Selma voting rights demonstrations), shows the truth of Lenin's observation that religion can best be finished off by introducing the class struggle into the church.

Bozell observes that the Church is playing into the hands of atheists. This is a recurring theme. Molnar has used it to explain why the works of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, S.J., have not been damned without qualification. He regards Teilhard as an important instrument in the opening to the Left. Teilhard, he states, makes God immanent. "It is no exaggeration to say," Molnar wrote, "that for Teilhard, God *is not* but only *becomes*, grows, as it were, with His own creation." Thus he is demonstrably a Gnostic.

Molnar wrote: "Under the spiritual clothing we hear the collectivist howl." He quotes Teilhard: "There can be no place for the poor in spirit, the skep-

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tics, the pessimists, the sad of heart, the weary and the immobilists." Molnar finds that Teilhard is not above "veiled threats," like the one quoted above, and concludes heroically by quoting Bernanos: "Someday I may yet be shot by a Bolshevik priest!"

Now that the Gnostic heresy has been traced even into the Roman Catholic Church, how do conservatives propose to deal with it? Neil McCaffrey, a frequent NR contributor, suggests "the possibility of a second *real* ecumenism: among Catholics and Protestants who, while frankly facing their differences, need allies against the common enemy, the anti-Christians within their own churches."

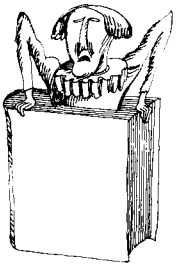
McCaffrey is suggesting that hatred of a common enemy is the bond to tie ecumenism together. Dealing with this enemy will require a revolutionary concept, if the world is ready for it: an inter-faith inquisition. Thus the ecumenical spirit can be applied to the search for heresy.

We have ranged far beyond politics and economics, our starting point, to come to this conclusion, but there are signs that the public is ready to do the same. John Stormer applied the title of his book, *None Dare Call It Treason*, not only to people who have openly betrayed America, but also to people who advocate the educational theories of John Dewey or differ with Stormer's fundamentalist religious convictions.

If conservative Catholics are to work in harmony with their fundamentalist allies, what about the fundamentalist distrust of a Catholic President? In the May 4, 1965 issue of NR, Alice-Leone Moats reopened this question, but with a new twist. It was not the Pope forcing a Catholic President into obedience. That never arose. But the Kennedy Administration, she wrote, applied considerable pressure on the Vatican to force the "opening to the Left." The issue is not whether a Catholic shall be President, but whether a liberal Catholic President can bend the Vatican to his will! The Inter-Faith Inquisition can take this question up at its first meeting.

Warren Sloat is on the public relations staff of Rutgers University. A former newspaperman, he has written for Cross Currents and other journals.

Books:



ENCYCLOPEDIA OF POETRY AND POETICS. *Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press. 906 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by William Walden

TWENTY DOLLARS is more than I generally pay for a book, but not excessive for one that promises to be indispensable. A full-page ad in the Saturday Review for the *Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* termed it indispensable for anyone who reads poetry, and offered it at the prepublication price of $20, warning that the price would become $25 after April 15. I read poetry and I like bargains, so I ordered the book.

It is impressively large (too heavy to prop on one's stomach for reading in bed), scholarly in tone and densely packed (906 pages, double columns, small type). It has hordes of contributors; essays on Ethiopean, Eskimoan, Thai and Sumerian poetry, among others; and hundreds of definitions. It contains no biographies or poems, except illustratively or incidentally. Since poetry is a comparatively limited field, I wondered how the editor had found enough material to fill so large a volume.

On my first free evening, I sat down to delve into its treasures. Skimming through the definitions of "abstract poem" and "accent," I arrived at "adynaton," which, I learned, is "a natural expression of exaggeration which has been in constant use from the primitive days of mankind." This enlightened but dismayed me, because I had not previously heard of, or even suspected the existence of, a form of expression so ancient and at one time so common. My dismay was only slightly alleviated when I learned that adynaton has suffered a marked decline in literary circles since Petrarchism. Skimming about in the book, I came across "blason . . . a poetic genre devoted to the praise or blame of almost anything." Since that category would embrace virtually any poem—or any piece of writing, or any work of art—the genre struck me as being rather on the broad side.

I began to feel depressed. I am no expert in the field of poetry, but I have more than a passing acquaintance with it, yet these terms were unfamiliar to me. For a few minutes I sat brooding, the book numbing my lap with its weight, appalled at my ignorance. A nagging suspicion tugged me up from the chair to consult *Webster's New International Dictionary* and the 12-volume *Oxford English Dictionary*. The terms could not be found in either of them.

This made me thoughtful. My unasked question as to how so large a volume could be compiled from so small a field had been partially answered, in a manner of speaking. I resumed reading the book less reverently.

"Dinggedicht," I was told, is "a type of poetry concerned with the description of objects from within rather than from the point of view of the observer." An odd viewpoint, I reflected, though possibly not so odd to the German mind. "Dróttkvætt" is "the elaborate and most common measure of skaldic poetry" (the simpler and rarer measure went mercifully unnamed). "Asynartete" was defined as "a classical verse composed of independent cola"—whether Pepsi, Coca, or any other kind was not specified. "Dyfalu reaches its highest excellence in the work of Dafydd ap Gwilum (14th c.)." I wondered whether Dafydd ap Gwilum was related to Ffurfwys gu Mrungg, of whose existence I was also previously unaware.

Continuing my browsing, I bumped head-on into "conduplicatio," which bore the notation "see anadiplosis." At "antanaclasis" I was again advised to see anadiplosis. Likewise at "symploce." I resisted all these suggestions and thumbed gamely on. At "anapodoton" I was told to see "anacoluthon." At "antibacchius" I was referred to "palimbacchius," at "trihemimural" to "caesura," and at "antimetabole" to "chiasmus." The notion struck me that a book could be fattened to encyclopedia size by the inclusion of a plethora of cross references, which are scholarly forms of buck passing.

Banishing this suspicion as unworthy of so high-minded a book, I plowed on. "Homoeoteleuton first occurs in Aristotle," I read. "It is generally agreed that homoeoteleuton and rhyme in

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quantitative meters were intentional." I was pleased to learn this, because I had dimly feared they might have been merely accidental.

"Muwashshah"—followed parenthetically by the clarifying term "muwashshahah"—bore only the cryptic notation, "See Arabic poetry (Spanish–Arabic section)." I decided to steer clear of this cross-reference trap, and plodded on. "Reizianum," the book alleged, is "an acephalous pherecratean named after Reiz (1733–90)." This definition filled me with warm admiration for the editor, who, I felt, was following through with splendid consistency: first, defining terms that cannot be found in other reference works; second, cross referencing them generously with similar terms; and finally, attributing them to obscure individuals, preferably those buried deep in the past. The system appeared to be foolproof, and I wondered what other techniques the volume concealed up its ample sleeves. The definition of reizianum continued, "Like the telesillean of which it is the catalectic form, it occurs . . . ." I recognized this as an attempt to shame me into looking up telesillean, but I resisted it without even a twinge of conscience—for about ten seconds; then curiosity overcame me. There was no entry for telesillean, but telesilleum, as I could by now almost have predicted, turned out to be "an acephalous glyconic named after Telesilla." The *famous* Telesilla, uncle to Reiz and brother-in-law to Dafydd ap Gwilum.

What finally undid me completely was not any of the recondite terms but the first sentence of the definition of a familiar term, "sincerity": "As a poetic criterion sincerity can be either helpful or harmful, according to the tact with which it is employed." And an encyclopedia, I thought as I closed the book with a snap, can be helpful or harmful, thick or thin, sincere or insincere, dispensable or indispensable, according to the tact with which it treats its subject. The volume has been carefully placed on the top shelf of my bookcase, well out of reach, and I am pleased to add, in the *sotto voce* of a footnote, that I still enjoy reading poetry.

William Walden is a member of the New Yorker magazine staff.

THE POSITIVE THINKERS *by Donald Meyer. New York: Doubleday. 358 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by Milton Kotler

THE STORY of the American middle-class soul in search for contentment is a tale of flat woe and magic cures. It lacks the bite of injustice, since its life is confirmed in social dogma, "complete by their own reckoning." Middle-class anxiety is the pathos of deluded success, anticipating joy through prescribed achievement, only to find that "making it" is dull fare. Desire rankles the soul, never forgiving character its needless sacrifice of spirit. Demons chew at conscience, not to defeat but to expand it; and body and soul are forced to a choice. William James called on us "to let go," but we have responded another way, more befitting a land where, as de Tocqueville said, "each individual becomes more like the rest, more weak and insignificant." Our modest choice has been to presume the perfection of self and society, accepting our melancholy as the work of devils within, combating our perfection. We have sought healing and cure without forsaking sickness. Sickness has become our national way of life; healing, its struggle; and cure its affirmation of "the unconscious courage of all existence to abide in life, not against it, to love it, not master it." It is this mystic trail of the nervous American in search of cure that Donald Meyer explores in *The Positive Thinkers.*

De Tocqueville warned that American equality and its universal competition would carry a liability of anxiety. With our omnipotent ambition in this land of plenty, the democratic spirit would also be a frazzled spirit. But we have not taken this legacy lying down. A vulgar history of mind cure has paralleled our finer progress, ever searching the alchemies of contentment through the magic mix of health, wealth and God. Meyer traces this history, ranging the theocracies of Mary Baker Eddy's Christian health; Dale Carnegie's discovery of the silent power of the barren smile (while Smiley Blanton growled and forewarned, "Love or Perish!"); Norman Vincent Peale's "positive thinking" without a thought; Rabbi Binstock's intonement of faith in Faith; and a host of minor healers who have peppered the melancholic spirit of the nervous American.

What these popular psychologies of cure have commonly shared is the faith in mind power to heal sickness of body and fissure of soul. Every mind technique has been tried—autosuggestion; thought dissolution through busywork; pressing wishes into imagined realities; distending thought into arid superconscious. All techniques are used except thought which might expose the source of illness and defeat our interest in preserving sickness for the sake of cure. Mind cure has been a way of life for millions. "Americans could get sick, then heal themselves. Becoming healthy became in itself an end, its own world and testimony to the nature of the world."

For Meyer, the rich history of mind cure goes to the root problem of dependency in American Protestant life—a feminization so to speak. He sees our failure to discern the source of our anxiety to lie in the passive order of American life, where God is reduced to society; man enlarged to type; and God and men weakened to insignificance in the absence of spirit. Person clings to type and church clings to society with the terror of a feeble matron. Man and God collapse into the immense being of American society itself, about which we can find neither fault nor cause to judge. As children of this Pan, our personal order reflects his perfection, as we are made in his image. In the absence of action to change the world and self toward greater fulfillment, there is only the mystic politics of mind cure working between perpetual sickness and miraculous cure.

Meyer urges political action as the proper middle term between psyche and God. The argument is only weakened by his failure to indicate what kind of politics and for what kind of self and world. He suggests only a politics of assertion, answering his

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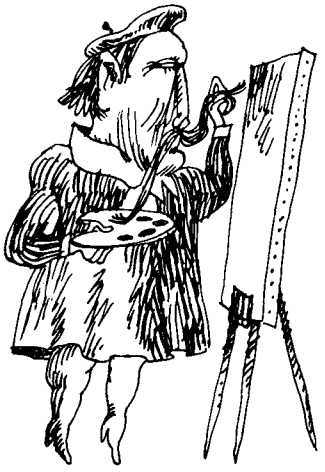
thesis that passivity and dependency are the root cause of our anxiety. But this amounts to no more than a politics of power to no other end than control by force. Power for what, control of what is not indicated. Such a politics of power to overcome passivity, with no general direction of social image, is no less a technique of mind cure than the techniques of his carnival of healers.

Art:



THE PEACE MANIFESTOS OF WILLY OESER

by Kurt F. Reinhardt

Die Liebe ist gross, und der Mensch wird kleiner.

"Love's greatness abides, but Man is getting smaller." This sentence is taken from a letter of recent date, addressed by Willy Oeser to the friend of his youth, the writer of this article. It might well serve as an epigraph for Oeser's entire *oeuvre*. What I wrote, as editor and art critic of the *Freiburger Tagespost*, in 1924, on the occasion of an exhibition of Oeser's mature paintings in Freiburg im Breisgau, is still valid: "Willy Oeser is on the way of leading art—after centuries of servitude in exile—back into its native land. The wondrous flower of this art grows out of the timelessness of the *anima naturaliter christiana*; it is nourished by the prayers of the centuries of faith. And yet, in every line, in every colour nuance, in every bodily form, is incarnate the suffering, the bitterness, the agony and the thirst for redeeming light which characterize the present age. In the tides of the eternal waters the flames of the rebellious and restless soul are cooled and pacified, and the weeping countenance of this fragile temporality hides its sorrow in the royal purple of Eternity."

Six of the antiwar paintings of Willy Oeser are reproduced here for the first time. They were exhibited in public only once, in the early days of August 1914, by the Goldschmidt Gallery in Frankfurt on the Main. They were painted shortly before the beginning of World War I. They show the young German Catholic artist's vision of the horrors of war and are a passionate plea for peace and universal brotherhood, uttered at a time when the artist's fellow-countrymen, this writer included, were still blinded by the "patriotic" chauvinist delirium which had seized Germany and which was soon to engulf Europe. What Jacques Callot presented in his graphic work as the documentary evidence of a witness to the atrocities of the Thirty Years War (1618–1648), and what Francisco de Goya, in 1808, described in retrospect in his *Desastres de la Guerra*, Willy Oeser, at the age of 17, anticipated with the clairvoyance of the born artist, giving it lapidary form in his own expressionistic style. And yet, this young student, who at that time finished the ninth (and last) grade of the humanistic Gymnasium in Mannheim, was of a cheerful nature and temperament, full of zest and *joie de vivre*. So were we all, despite a dim presentiment of the shadows which the coming cataclysms were beginning to cast over our lives.

Not unexpectedly, the Frankfurt exhibit immediately aroused violent public indignation and protest, and the paintings had to be withdrawn. They have since lain hidden from the public eye, known and seen only by some of the artist's intimate friends. From 1933 to 1945, they lay buried under heavy layers of coal in the subterranean cellars of the Mannheim Castle. Willy Oeser was born in 1897 in this once resplendent residential palace of the Princes of the Palatinate. In this monument of German baroque architecture the artist's family resided until the castle was almost totally destroyed by the great conflagration that followed the saturation bombing by the Allies in 1943. The modern big industrial metropolis had treasured its castle as one of several reminders of the city's glorious past as one of the great centers of baroque and rococo art, music and culture.

Almost miraculously the 11 paintings escaped the fate of most of the art treasures and of most of the inhabitants of the castle. After 1945, Willy Oeser found a new home and a new temporary shelter for his antiwar paintings in nearby Heidelberg, where he and his wife are residing today. His only son, who had spent agonizing years as a POW in Russia, returned a physical and nervous wreck. His life was eventually saved by aid that came from the United States. He is now a successful physician in Mannheim, happily married to a colleague in the medical profession. The artist's own health is very fragile: he is still suffering from the lead poisoning he contracted in the pursuit of his work. He takes a dim view of the future of Europe and of Germany, and he is quite unimpressed by Germany's "economic miracle." Above all, he is deeply concerned about the future of his radical "Peace Manifestos" of 1914. He would be happy to see them safely in the hands of an American collector or in the possession of an American art gallery.

Oeser's "Peace Manifestos" thus survived World War I, the horrors of the Hitler régime and World War II. They escaped the ever-watchful eye of the Gestapo as well as the *autos-da-fé* of 1933 and 1937, when many of the artist's later works were torn from the walls of German churches and synagogues or removed from German museums and—jointly with more than 1000 other "degenerate" art works—were publicly burned in Berlin and other German cities. Actually, Willy Oeser never reverted to the dominant theme of his paintings of 1914. His later works are all variants of a profoundly religious experience, centered in his highly personal interpretation of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. They are today widely dispersed in several lands—in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France and Israel, and include the monumental mosaic of 1929, the altarpiece in the Church of the Sacred Heart at Ratingen in the Rhineland.

Willy Oeser comes from a family of artists and scholars. Among his forebears was Adam Friedrich Oeser, painter, etcher and sculptor, who died

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Seated, l. to r.: Bennett Cerf, Faith Baldwin, Bergen Evans, Bruce Catton, Mignon G. Eberhart, John Caples, J. D. Ratcliff. Standing: Mark Wiseman, Max Shulman, Rudolf Flesch, Red Smith, Rod Serling.

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By Gordon Carroll

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Gordon Carroll, Director of the Famous Writers School, of Westport, Connecticut, is former editor of *Reader's Digest, Time, Inc.* and *Coronet.*

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in Leipzig in 1799 and who familiarized the young Goethe with the preclassicist style of the Vienna school of painting. The artist's grandfather was the painter August L. Oeser, and his father, Max Oeser, was a renowned writer and the chief librarian of the once internationally famous Castle-Library of Mannheim. It was in the splendid setting of this court library that the young Friedrich Schiller, Germany's great classical playwright, historian and philosopher, delivered his stirring address on "The Stage as a Moral Institution."

But let the artist speak for himself: "I was born in one of the largest and most magnificent castles of Europe. It was in this environment that I lived and worked until the night of horrors of 1943 reduced the castle to rubble and ashes. Art was my native habitat. The room which heard my first cry was at one time the studio of Louis Coblitz, the court painter of the Archduchess Stephanie, the adopted daughter of Napoleon. The castle was her temporary residence. The smiles of the painter's portraits of lovely rococo ladies surrounded my cradle. The vast flights of spacious rooms, stately halls and stairways were adorned with exquisite wood carvings, stucco ornaments, paintings and shining inlaid floors. The great Library Hall in which all this splendor converged was domed by a monumental painted allegorical sky-scene, titled 'The Unveiling of Truth in the Arts and Sciences.'

"Born with a hunger for knowledge, I was intellectually and spiritually nourished by these surrounding muses. Adjoining the library was the art gallery with its fine collection of old masters. Everything that I learned in later life by visiting the great art centers and museums of Europe was merely a broadening and deepening of the indelible impressions I had received in early childhood and adolescence. The director of the castle gallery, himself a painter, guided and encouraged my childish artistic endeavors. The water colour, coloured crayon and oil sketches, in part dating back to the age of five, produced the first newspaper notices when they were seen in the show window of a store to which my father had given them for framing."

It was, however, the thematic structure of *religious* art which spoke most articulately to Willy Oeser in the interior of the Mannheim Castle. In the manner of many princely residences of the age of baroque and rococo, the architectural design of the castle included two churches. The hallway of the Oeser family's living quarters opened directly onto the choir loft of the ornate Court-Church. The boy's hands could touch the painted ceiling, and there is no doubt that the intimate companionship with the vast spaces and the expanded walled surfaces, filled with festival light and colour, aroused and strengthened the artist's tendency toward that qualitatively rather than quantitatively determined monumentality of form which characterizes his later works. An integral part of the castle was also the *Jesuitenkirche*, often referred to as the "Baroque Cathedral on the Rhine." It was the parish church of the Oeser family, and the dean who headed the cathedral chapter graciously gave the boy permission to copy the altarpiece of the Annunciation.

Aside from his preoccupation with religious themes, the young artist engaged in the pictorial and at times symbolic representation of significant contemporary events, as is shown, for example, by an India ink etching of the shipwreck of the Titanic in 1912. It speaks eloquently of the same intensive involvement in present-day life to which we owe the 11 pacifist manifestos of 1914. Here I should like to give the word again to the artist himself:

The threat of war after the assassination of the Austro-Hungarian Heir Presumptive, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, at Sarajevo, on June 28, 1914, struck me to the quick. The spiritual climate in which I had been raised had made me immune to the virus of the war "spirit." Besides, the ivy-covered ruins of the ancient castle in neighboring Heidelberg served as a constant reminder of the inevitable side effects and aftermath of war. I was still a child when I asked my parents again and again why such things can and do happen. But most shocking and abhorrent to me was the idea of ever being compelled to kill a human being. The mere thought was utterly revolting to me. In 1914, I shocked my teachers in the Mannheim Gymnasium when I refused to volunteer for war service, reaffirming categorically that I would never obey an order to kill one of my fellow humans. I was the only one among my classmates to speak out without equivocation. When I came home after this confrontation with some representatives of the "establishment," I seized my brush and painted the first of the 11 works which were inspired by silent despair and by the dire presentiment of all horrors that were to come. The other ten paintings were done in rather rapid succession. The war had not even started, but the air was heavy with the poison of a hatred which remained incomprehensible to me. This series of antiwar paintings was climaxed by a vision of peace and reconciliation between Germany and France, the proverbial "hereditary enemies."

The two World Wars left us burned out and impoverished, bereft of some of our dearest loved ones. But life had to go on, somehow and somewhere, and there was never any dearth of artistic work. New challenges demanded novel responses. And the experience of eternal truth had become more genuine and more deeply anchored by the political and social upheavals of the times.

In a surprisingly short time Willy Oeser's religious paintings found open hearts as well as open doors. Ludwig Justi, the director of the National Gallery in Berlin, became one of the artist's most influential admirers and protectors. By 1929, Oeser had found generous acceptance in the newly flourishing German church architecture. While the monumental "Stations of the Cross" at Schneidemühl in the German East (since 1945 under Polish sovereignty) marks a high point in the artist's development up to 1930, the works which were created after World War II culminate in several cycles of stained glass windows, most of them placed in churches and synagogues of German South. At the International Exhibition of Christian Art in Antwerp (1950) Willy Oeser was one of the very few German artists represented. Asked why one of the most unconventional and controversial German painters was thus honored, the spokesman of the directorate replied: "We have not accepted the judgment of others; we ourselves have looked around in postwar Germany with open eyes."

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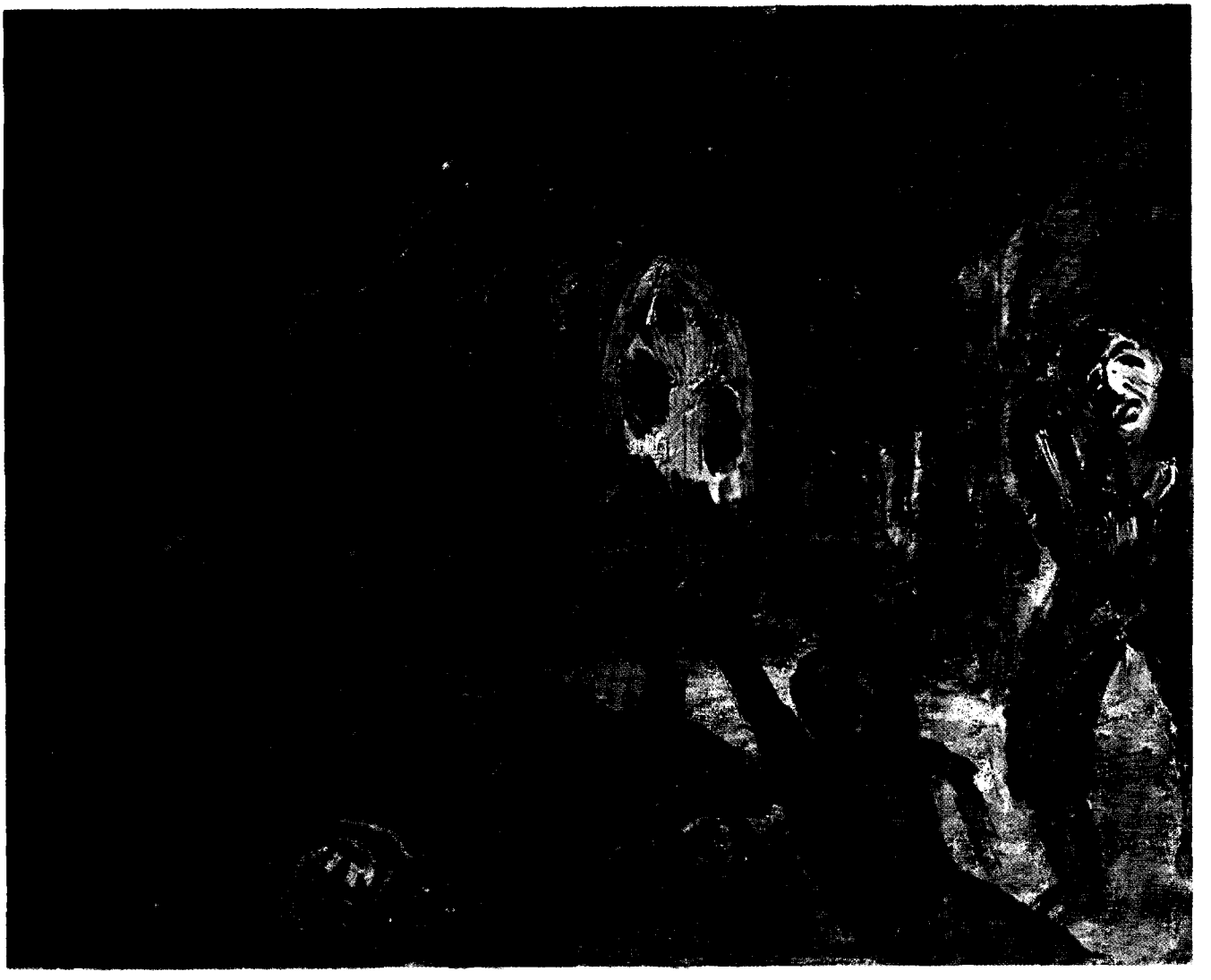
The Peace Manifestos of Willy Oeser

Left: *Drowning Sailor*

Right: *Remembrance of the Comrade Killed on "The Field of Honour"*

Below: *Street Fighting*



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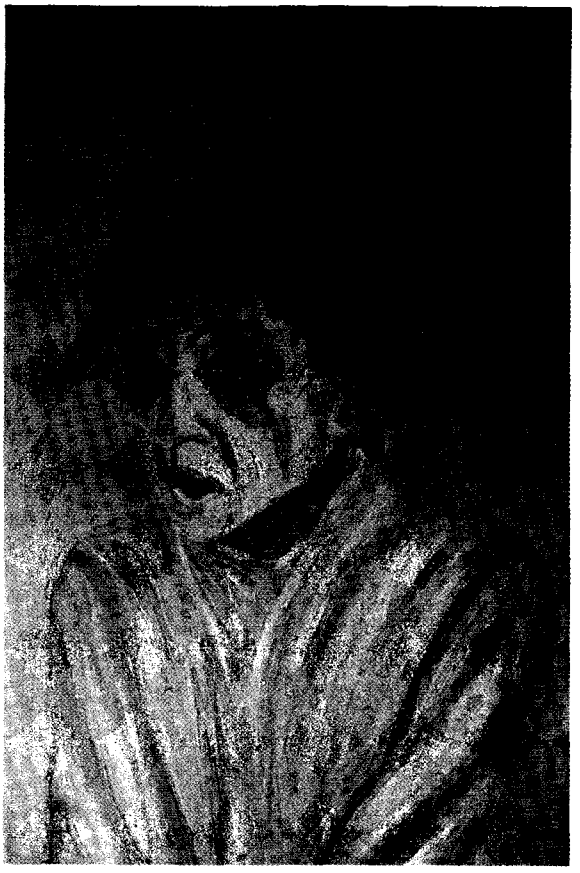
Left: *Finis*

Right: *Underneath the Cross*

Below: *Reconciliation in Death*



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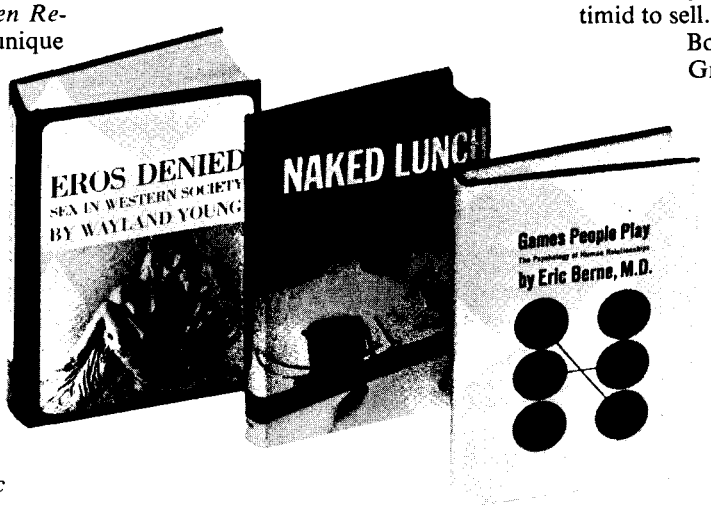

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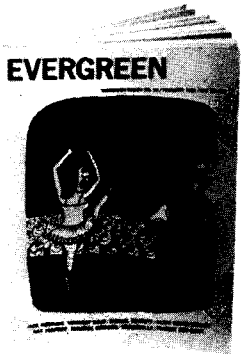

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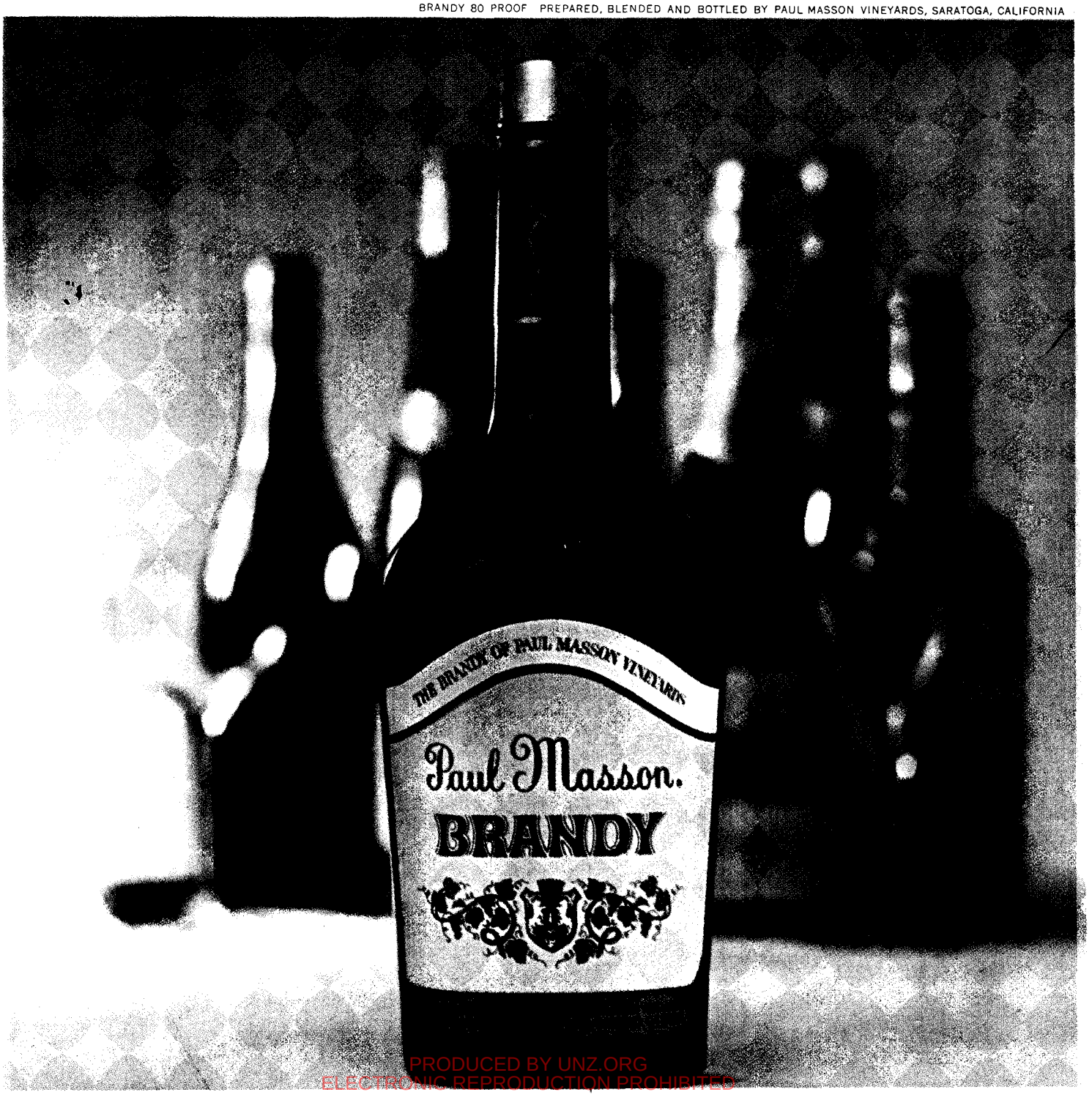

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